



Washington State Fusion Center INFOCUS



MONDAY — 12 SEP 2022

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Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	09/11 Russia collapse enrages Kremlin allies
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/11/europe/ukraine-russia-eastern-front/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)The last week has seen a stunning transformation of the battlefield in eastern Ukraine, as a swift armored offensive by Ukrainian forces rolled through lines of Russian defenses and recaptured more than 3,000 square kilometers of territory.</p> <p>That is more territory than Russian forces have captured in all their operations in Ukraine since April.</p> <p>As much as the offensive was brilliantly conceived and executed, it also succeeded because of Russian inadequacies. Throughout swathes of the Kharkiv region, Russian units were poorly organized and equipped -- and many offered little resistance.</p> <p>Their failures, and their disorderly retreat to the east, has made the goal of President Vladimir Putin's special military operation to take all of Luhansk and Donetsk regions considerably harder to attain.</p> <p>Over the weekend, the Russian retreat continued from border areas that had been occupied since March. Villages within five kilometers of the border were raising the Ukrainian flag.</p> <p>The collapse of Russian defenses has ignited recriminations among influential Russian military bloggers and personalities in Russian state media.</p> <p>As the Ukrainian flag was raised in one community after another over the last several days, one question came into focus: how does the Kremlin respond?</p> <p>A lightning operation</p> <p>Ukrainian officials had telegraphed that an offensive was imminent -- but not where it actually happened. There was plenty of noise about a counter-attack in the south, and even US officials talked about Ukrainian operations to "shape the battlefield" in Kherson. Russian reinforcements -- perhaps as many as 10,000 -- streamed into the region over a period of weeks.</p> <p>There was indeed a Ukrainian assault in Kherson, but one whose intention appears to have been to fix Russian forces, while the real effort came hundreds of miles to the north. It was a disinformation operation the Russians might have been proud of.</p> <p>Kateryna Stepanenko at the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based analytical group, says the deception worked.</p> <p>"Ukrainian military officials reported that (Russian) Eastern Military District elements that had previously supported offensive operations towards Sloviansk had redeployed to the Southern Axis," she told CNN.</p> <p>Their replacements were clearly not up to the job -- a mixed bag, Stepanenko said, of "Cossack volunteers, volunteer units, DNR/LNR militia units, and the Russian Rosgvardia (National Guard). Such forces were not sufficient to defend a vast and complex front line."</p> <p>The Ukrainians picked the weakest spot in Russian defenses for their initial thrust -- an area controlled by the Luhansk militia with Russian National Guard units further back. They were no match for a highly mobile armored assault that quickly rendered artillery irrelevant.</p> <p>Igor Strelkov, formerly the head of the Donetsk People's Republic militia and now a caustic critic of Russian military shortcomings, noted the poor training of these units and "the exceptional caution of the actions of Russian aviation." In short, Russian front-line units were hung out to dry without sufficient air support.</p>

Multiple videos geolocated and analyzed by CNN, as well as local accounts, depict a chaotic withdrawal of Russian units, with large amounts of ammunition and hardware left behind.

The poor quality of Russian defenses along a critical north-south axis sustaining the Donetsk offensive is hard to fathom. Once underway, the intent of the Ukrainian offensive was crystal clear -- to destroy that artery of resupply. Within three days, they had done so -- not least because Russian reinforcements were slow to be mobilized.

Recriminations begin

The Russian Defense Ministry on Saturday sought to portray the abandonment of Kharkiv as a planned redirection of efforts to the Donetsk region -- but it actually complicates those efforts.

Until this week, the Russians were able to attack Ukrainian defenses in Donetsk from three directions: north, east and south. The northern axis is now gone: the threat to the industrial belt in and around Sloviansk has much diminished, as has the prospect of Ukrainian defenses being surrounded.

Simply put, the battlefield in eastern Ukraine has been redrawn in days.

The most influential -- and perhaps surprising -- public critic of the situation was Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, who has supplied thousands of fighters to the offensive. In a Telegram post Sunday, he said he would be contacting senior officials at the Defense Ministry to spell out his message.

"It's clear that mistakes were made. I think they will draw a few conclusions," he said.

Hinting at disarray among commanders, Kadyrov said that "if Russia's General Staff did not want to leave, the (troops) wouldn't back out" -- but Russian soldiers "didn't have proper military training" and that led to them to retreat.

Influential military bloggers in Russia have been even more blunt. Zakhar Prilepin, whose Telegram channel has more than 250,000 subscribers, reposted a commentary that described events in Kharkiv as a "catastrophe" and a wholesale failure of intelligence.

"Now we can observe the result of the criminal irresponsibility of those who were responsible for this direction," the post reads, before concluding: "The special military operation is long over. There is a war going on."

Another pro-Putin blogger who goes by the name Kholmogorov reposted an equally scathing account by the Partizan Telegram channel from the front lines, which that essentially accused the Russian authorities of abandoning the troops.

"The soldiers were on foot with one machine gun and a sack. Abandoned by the command, not knowing the way, they walked at random," the post said.

The poster, who describes himself as a Russian Orthodox nationalist, says that while hatred of the enemy grows, "hatred of the government and command is growing even more."

Adding his own thoughts, Kholmogorov said: "Lord, save the Russian soldiers from blows from the front and even more from blows in the back."

A similar analysis came from the Telegram channel of Pyotr Lundstrem.

"There are NO thermal imagers, NO bulletproof vests, NO reconnaissance equipment, NO secure communications, NOT enough copters, NO first aid kits in the army."

Referring to commemorations in Russia this weekend for the Day of Moscow, the city's birthday, he added: "You are celebrating a billionth holiday. What's wrong with you?"

On Saturday, as the rout continued, Putin was inaugurating a ferris wheel in Moscow.

The Institute for the Study of War notes the "withdrawal announcement further alienated the Russian milblogger and Russian nationalist communities that support the Kremlin's grandiose vision for capturing the entirety of Ukraine."

Putin's next move

Prominent media figures in Russia are trying to spin this week's calamity as a planned operation. Television host Vladimir Soloviev reposted a Telegram commentary that insisted the "enemy, buying into an easy advance on a given sector of the front, drives into a trap."

"Currently, Russian units are purposefully regrouping," the commentary added, even though there is little sign of that.

That begs the question as to how the Kremlin prosecutes the war after suffering its worst week of the entire campaign. It appears to be short of high-quality units. Some existing battalion tactical groups have been reconstituted; volunteer battalions have been raised across Russia to form a Third Army Corps. US officials say the Russians are running short of munitions, even turning to North Korea for supplies.

Stepanenko, at the Institute for the Study of War, told CNN that the remarkable success of the Ukrainian counteroffensive will force a reappraisal of how the new army corps is used.

Stepanenko, who studies the recruitment and organization of the Russian military, says the Russians "might still attempt to use these units to stop the Ukrainian counter-offensive in Kharkiv, although rushing ill-trained and unprepared raw units into such operations would be a highly dangerous endeavor."

She believes that given the Russian need for fresh manpower, "it is likely that the Russian forces are deploying these elements directly onto the front lines in any case based on the reports that some volunteer battalions are already fighting on the Kherson front lines."

The Russian military can still bring considerable power to bear in terms of its rocket, artillery and missile forces. But despite one shuffle of the high command already, its ground operations seem poorly organized, with little autonomy devolved to commanders. The last week has laid bare issues of motivation and leadership.

Russian bloggers who have supported the offensive say a radical rethink is required. One commented: "A change of approach to the war in Ukraine is needed. Mobilization of the economy and industry. Creation of a political control center for war."

Strelkov came to the same conclusion, saying it is time to "start fighting for real (with martial law, the mobilization of the army and the economy.)"

Throughout the conflict, Putin has avoided a general mobilization, which might be unpopular at home. It's impossible to know whether the Kremlin will now double down in an effort to complete the special military operation or begins to look for a negotiated settlement.

The first option looks a tall order given the events of the last week; the second would be humiliating. The third possibility, perhaps the most likely, is that Russia will persist with its grinding inch-by-inch onslaught while taking little to no additional territory. But it now faces an adversary with the wind in its sails and fresh infusions of Western military aid being prepared for the winter months.

Ukraine's battlefield advances have rejuvenated allied support, with a meeting in Germany this weekend producing further pledges of long-term support.

HEADLINE	09/09 More homes built in wildfire harm's way
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/09/09/climate/growing-wildfire-risk-homes.html?action=click&module=Well&pgtype=Homepage&section=Climate%20and%20Environment
GIST	<p>Across the Western United States, wildfires are growing larger and more severe as global warming intensifies. At the same time, new data shows, more Americans than ever are moving to parts of the country more likely to burn, raising the odds of catastrophe.</p> <p>In 2020, more than 16 million homes in the West were located in fire-prone areas near forests, grasslands and shrub lands, where the risks of conflagration are highest. That's a rise from roughly 10 million homes in 1990, according to research published Friday from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the United States Forest Service.</p> <p>"That's the perfect storm," said Volker Radeloff, a professor of forest ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who helped lead the research. "Millions of houses have been built in places that will sooner or later burn," he said, even as climate change increases the risks of major wildfires across the West with extreme heat and dryness.</p> <p>Nowhere is this dynamic more visible than in California, where eight of the largest blazes on record have struck in the past five years. The state now has roughly 5.1 million homes in what's known as the "wildland-urban interface," the term for areas, often on the outskirts of cities, where houses and other development are built near or among flammable wild vegetation.</p> <p>The foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains have seen especially fast growth.</p> <p>In 1990, there was already substantial housing development in the fire-prone Sierra foothills. By 2020 development had pushed even further into formerly wild lands.</p> <p>Many of these areas have repeatedly burned or been menaced by wildfires during that period.</p> <p>When wildfires erupt, they tend to inflict most of their damage in these transitional zones where homes and businesses encroach on otherwise undeveloped wilderness.</p> <p>Examples include the Camp Fire in 2018 that incinerated the forest-surrounded town of Paradise, Calif., or the Woolsey Fire that same year, which tore through shrub- and grass-covered canyons northwest of Los Angeles and burned more than 1,600 structures.</p> <p>There's no single reason for the explosion of development in the wildland-urban interface, or WUI (pronounced "woo-ee"). Some people move to live closer to nature, or because costs are lower. In California, many cities have restricted development in denser downtown areas, exacerbating the state's housing crisis and pushing people to the outer fringes.</p> <p>"By and large, most new development housing construction in California has been going on in the periphery of existing urban areas," said Karen Chapple, a professor of city and regional planning at the University of California, Berkeley, and co-author of a report on rebuilding after wildfire disasters. "It's happening because that's where the land is cheap. So we end up putting housing in these very vulnerable areas."</p> <p>Similar trends can be seen throughout the West. In Colorado, the number of homes built in the wildland-urban interface has nearly doubled to more than 1 million since 1990. Some of the fastest growth has unfolded along the Front Range, where the number of large, high-severity fires has increased in recent decades.</p>

Texas now has 3.2 million homes in the WUI and saw the fastest growth of any state over the past decade. While some of Texas' most destructive wildfires have been in forests, many of its wildlands consist of grasses and shrubs, where fires can spread more rapidly and often damage more homes. Last year, the state climatologist's office warned that [wildfire risks were growing](#) as the state dries out.

The rapid growth of housing in flammable areas is a key reason wildfires have become more destructive over time. Not only are the homes themselves more likely to burn, but when more people live near forests and grasslands, there's also a greater chance that fires will start in the first place. While wildfires are often sparked by lightning, humans themselves [cause the vast majority of ignitions](#), often by accident: a cigarette thrown out the window, or a vehicle's muffler setting fire to dry grass.

More homes in fire-prone territory also increases the demand for firefighting in often difficult terrain, which can stretch fire suppression resources thin and, in turn, lead to a dangerous build-up of vegetation in areas that experts say [would benefit from burning at low levels](#) more frequently. Wildfires have long been a natural part of the Western landscape and only become disasters when humans are in the path.

"The more homes we have in the wildlands, the more people we have to protect, more people that need to be evacuated," said Miranda H. Mockrin, a research scientist at the United States Forest Service, who worked on the new study. "It becomes more of a challenge."

The researchers estimated that 136,000 homes were within the perimeter of Western wildfires in the 2010s, compared with fewer than 31,000 in the 1990s. Some of that increase occurred because fires are burning ever-larger amounts of territory. But about one-quarter of the homes threatened by wildfires over the past decade did not exist in the 1990s, indicating that housing growth in wildfire territory was a key driver of the rise in fire danger.

"We have this sort of two-headed monster," said Stephen M. Strader, a disaster scientist at Villanova University, who was not involved in the research. "One side is a changing environment, and the atmosphere being altered by climate change. But if you look at that in isolation you forget about the other side: Society is changing, our cities are changing, our land is changing."

"All these conditions coming together," he said, "creates a more disaster-prone society."

While the new data only runs through 2020, a [separate report](#) by Redfin, the Seattle-based real estate brokerage, found that demand for homes in fire-prone areas has continued to grow since the coronavirus pandemic began, as remote work allowed Americans to move further from job centers.

Wildfire experts say it is unlikely that Western states will ever be able to stop all growth in the wildland-urban interface. But alongside [efforts to improve forest management](#) in these areas, governments could impose tighter restrictions on future development to ensure communities are better protected against fire dangers that are unavoidable.

"So much of the West is wildfire-prone that it's a non-starter to say you shouldn't live anywhere there's a risk," said Molly Mowery, executive director of the Community Wildfire Planning Center, a Denver-based nonprofit. "It's much more productive to focus on what we can do to protect our homes and neighborhoods when fire does arrive."

Such [protections](#) include creating more "defensible space" around homes and neighborhoods, cleared of brush and vegetation, to keep blazes at a distance. It would mean building houses so they are better protected against burning embers carried by the wind, which often cause structural fires by blowing into homes through vents in the eaves or sides.

In 2008, California adopted some of the strictest rules in the country for new homes in high-risk fire areas, requiring developers to use fire-resistant materials and to provide access to water for firefighters. Those rules can make a difference. After the Camp Fire, one analysis found that [about 51 percent of the 350](#)

[single-family homes](#) in Paradise built to the new codes escaped damage, compared with just 18 percent of the 12,100 homes built before the standards.

Most Western states don't have statewide codes, however, and it is usually up to local governments to enforce their own standards. In 2019, Austin, Tex., one of the fastest-growing cities in the country, took matters into its own hands, adopting [stringent rules for new homes in the WUI](#) that require, for instance, noncombustible screens over attic vents and safe storage of propane tanks.

Yet building codes for new construction only go so far, because they don't address the millions of vulnerable homes that have already been built. Properly protecting an existing home can be expensive, [costing up to \\$27,000](#), which means that governments may need to step in to help.

For now, progress remains patchy. In many regions, developers have resisted new regulations, warning that they could drive up housing costs. And even after communities suffer from a wildfire, the pressure to rebuild quickly, and without new requirements, is intense.

"Too many places are still operating under the mind-set that they can keep building in high-risk areas and if there's a wildfire, the firefighters will come and save their homes," said Kimiko Barrett, a wildfire researcher at Headwaters Economics, a nonprofit research group. "Once we realize that we're not going to stop every last fire, we can start thinking about how to live with wildfire."

There are signs that things may be changing. After the Marshall Fire in Boulder in late 2021 destroyed more than 1,000 buildings, lawmakers in Colorado [began discussing new statewide codes](#), though they have yet to adopt any. And over the past decade, California has actually added more homes outside the WUI than within it. Dr. Radeloff said it was still too early to tell whether that's a sign of changing attitudes toward fire risk.

"It's a beautiful place to live," said Dr. Radeloff of the wildland-urban interface. "But as a society, we really have to wrap our heads around what living so close to nature really entails."

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HEADLINE	09/12 UNHCR: Russia intimidating war opponents
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-intimidating-opponents-ukraine-war-acting-un-rights-chief-2022-09-12/
GIST	<p>GENEVA, Sept 12 (Reuters) - The acting United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said on Monday that Russia was intimidating opponents of the war in Ukraine.</p> <p>"In the Russian Federation, the intimidation, restrictive measures and sanctions against people voicing opposition to the war in Ukraine undermine the exercise of constitutionally guaranteed fundamental freedoms, including the rights to free assembly, expression and association," Nada Al-Nashif said in a speech at the opening of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.</p> <p>She also said Moscow was violating the right to access information by pressuring journalists, blocking the internet and through other forms of censorship.</p> <p>Russia's diplomatic mission in Geneva did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Moscow has created stronger laws this year to punish those deemed to discredit the armed forces, spread fake information or call for unsanctioned public action.</p> <p>Non-governmental organisations are calling for states to adopt a resolution at the council's month-long meeting to create an independent expert to investigate alleged human rights violations in Russia. Last week a Russian court stripped Novaya Gazeta, one of Russia's few remaining independent news outlets, of its licence.</p>

	<p>The United Nations General Assembly suspended Russia as a member of the 47-member Human Rights Council in April over its invasion of Ukraine on February 24.</p> <p>Russia denies targeting civilians in Ukraine and says it is carrying out a "special military operation" that aims to destroy Ukraine's military infrastructure. Ukraine and allies say Moscow invaded without provocation.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Ukraine counteroffensive momentum
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-kyiv-kharkiv-a691ab16016aab01cedb68ea5e247b37?utm_source=homepage&utm_medium=TopNews&utm_campaign=position_1
GIST	<p>KHARKIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine kept the counteroffensive momentum in its war against Russia going Monday, saying it liberated one village after another and claiming that in one region it pushed the invaders back right up to the border in a lightning military move that stunned many.</p> <p>“In some areas of the front, our defenders reached the state border with the Russian Federation,” said the regional governor of the northeastern Kharkiv region, Oleh Syniehubov. Russian troops crossed the border in the region on Feb. 24, the first day of the invasion.</p> <p>Russia acknowledged the military developments by saying it was regrouping. As throughout the war, military claims were hard to verify independently.</p> <p>After Sunday’s attacks by Russia on power stations and other infrastructure that knocked out electricity in many place across Ukraine, Kyiv authorities also said that electric power and water supplies have been restored to some 80 percent in the Kharkiv region.</p> <p>“You are heroes!!!, wrote Kharkiv mayor Ihor Terekhov early in the morning on Telegram, highlighting the ebullient mood in the nation that has endured more than 200 days of war and occupation. “Thanks to everyone who did everything possible on this most difficult night for Kharkiv to normalize the life of the city as soon as possible.”</p> <p>The General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine said that its troops had liberated more than 20 settlements within the past day.</p> <p>The buoyant mood was also captured by a defiant President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on social media late Sunday, comments that immediately went viral.</p> <p>“Do you still think you can intimidate, break us, force us to make concessions? Did you really not understand anything? Don’t understand who we are? What we stand for? What we are talking about,” Zelenskyy exhorted.</p> <p>“Read my lips,” he continued. “Cold, hunger, darkness and thirst for us are not as scary and deadly as your ‘friendship’ and brotherhood.”</p> <p>He added: “We will be with gas, lights, water and food... and WITHOUT you!”</p> <p>Yet even amid the ebullience, the casualties kept mounting. Ukraine’s presidential office said Monday that at least four civilians were killed and 11 others were wounded in a series of Russian attacks in nine regions of the country. The U.N. Human Rights Office said last week that 5,767 civilians were killed so far.</p> <p>The Russians continued shelling Nikopol across the Dnieper from the Zaporizhzhia power plant, damaging several buildings there and leaving Europe’s largest nuclear facility in a precarious position.</p>

The turn of events and all-important reversal of initiative was backed up by international observers who warned of dire times ahead for Russian troops. It stood in sharp contrast to the first days of the war when Russian troops were moving toward Kyiv's doorstep.

"In the face of Ukrainian advances, Russia has likely ordered the withdrawal of its troops from the entirety of occupied Kharkiv Oblast west of the Oskil River," the British defense ministry said Monday, signifying a major advance by Kyiv. "Ukraine has recaptured territory at least twice the size of Greater London," it said.

The British said that likely will further deteriorate the trust Russian forces have in their commanders. Ukraine's initial move on the southern Kherson area, drawing the attention of enemy troops there, before pouncing on more depleted Russian lines in the northeast beyond Kharkiv has been seen as a great military move so far.

Even around Kherson, Russia is struggling to bring forces across the Dnipro River to stop the Ukrainian offensive there, the British military said.

It added: "The rapid Ukrainian successes have significant implications for Russia's overall operational design. The majority of the force in Ukraine is highly likely being forced to prioritize emergency defensive actions."

The Washington-based Institute for the Study of War said Monday that Russia likely lacks the reserve forces it needs to bolster its defenses in Ukraine.

While the war likely will stretch into next year, the institute believes that "Ukraine has turned the tide of this war in its favor" by effectively using Western-supplied weapons like the long-range HIMARS missile system and strong battlefield tactics. "Kyiv will likely increasingly dictate the location and nature of the major fighting."

Seeking to contain its loss of momentum, Russia fired missiles at power plants and other critical infrastructure, immediately meeting with Ukrainian and U.S. criticism for centering on civilian targets.

The bombardment ignited a massive fire at a power station on Kharkiv's western outskirts and killed at least one person. Zelenskyy denounced the "deliberate and cynical missile strikes" against civilian targets as acts of terrorism.

"Russia's apparent response to Ukraine liberating cities and villages in the east: sending missiles to attempt to destroy critical civilian infrastructure," U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Bridget A. Brink wrote.

Separately, the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in the Russia-occupied south completely shut down in a bid to prevent a radiation disaster as fighting raged nearby.

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HEADLINE	09/11 Seattle Police Dept. losses continue
SOURCE	https://mynorthwest.com/3620154/rantz-seattle-police-department-screwed-as-catastrophic-losses-continue/
GIST	<p>As the city of Seattle experiences historically high crime, its police department continues to dwindle and recruitment efforts continue to fail. One former King County Sheriff puts it bluntly: "we're screwed."</p> <p>The Seattle Police Department (SPD) lost six officers in August, according to a police source, bringing the year's total separations to 122 and nearly 500 since the city council opted to defund the police department in 2020. What's more alarming is the 350 officers that will be eligible for retirement at the end of the year. If even a fraction leaves the department, Seattle may not have a fully functioning police department.</p> <p>Union leadership warns the city is on the verge of an unimaginable public safety crisis.</p>

A depleted police department

Seattle [saw](#) 11 homicides in August, the single deadliest month since 2008, according to SPD records. And the police chief warns the city may reach a 25-year-high homicide rate by the end of the year.

To Seattle Police Officers Guild (SPOG) president officer Mike Solan, the crime surge is a result of a depleted police department.

“There’s been a mass exodus of policing. The profession itself is almost on its last breath. And what happens is that criminals fill the void when there’s no law enforcement,” Solan warned on the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH. “And when you connect to funding, and then you connect the reform laws that were just absolutely catastrophic to our communities, This is the sad result. And who ends up paying the price? Our communities.”

Before the start of the department’s mass exodus in 2019, which was hastened in 2020, city leaders hoped for between 1,500 and 1,600 officers. Now, the city revised its numbers down to 1,400. But as of August 28, the SPD only had 877 deployable officers, [according](#) to SPOG.

“These are catastrophic losses,” Solan says.

Solan warns that he’s most “fearful of the 350 that are eligible to retire” and that “we’re very close” to a decimated SPD.

“We can’t even absorb another 20, 25. I mean, we’re already at or below minimum safe status levels every patrol shift. People are getting burned out with just [augmenting for patrol watches, because there’s just so much work out there](#). And they’ve worked so much. They’re tired. And then they have all these special events, the stadiums, sporting events, concerts, just trying to contain the crowds, traffic, all this stuff. We’re trying to work through and manage post defunding. And it’s very difficult, but it’s going to take strong leadership on both sides to get something accomplished to protect the city from a complete disaster.”

Unfortunately, however, recruitment efforts are not yet delivering results.

SPD recruitment efforts are not working

According to an internal document obtained by the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH, the SPD has only recruited or re-hired 41 officers to date. SPOG projects that number will be 60 by the end of the year. Solan doesn’t know how the department will recover at this pace.

“We can barely get any recruits. It’s just, I don’t know. I don’t want to send a defeatist. I always try to be an optimist. But it’s not looking good,” he said.

Solan argues it will take a decade to get the department to the staffing it needs to police a city the size of Seattle. Other law enforcement experts contacted by the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH concur.

“It’s going to take at least a decade, at a minimum, to get to the level of 1400 to 1500 people at a minimum,” Solan warns. “And that doesn’t bode well for the current officers that are here, in terms of having a safe environment to work in. And then I think, more importantly, it’s the community that we serve professionally on a daily basis. This crime surge is here, and it’s real, and it’s only going to get worse.”

The SPD is not the only department struggling with staffing.

‘We’re screwed’

The King County Sheriff’s Office (KCSO) is not fully staffed.

A spokesperson with the office confirmed it experienced 74 separations so far this year, leaving the department with just 634 deployable staff. It has 113 open deputy spots that are not being filled fast enough.

Former sheriff John Urqhart saw these problems coming.

“We’re screwed. How long do you think it’s going to take to hire the 500 officers that SPD wants when they can barely hire five a month?” Urqhart said to the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH. “The sheriff’s office is down by 115. How long is it going to take to get them back up to some sort of decent staffing? You know, I hate to be pessimistic, but this is not going to go away. This is not going to go away.”

‘I don’t know how the city moves forward’

Seattle officers are currently working without a contract. While a fair contract won’t completely fix the staffing crisis, it’ll help keep more officers from separating.

“You know, we would like to settle something sooner rather than later because time is of the essence,” Solan says.

Solan says that SPOG leadership is meeting with Mayor Bruce Harrell’s team “more often than not,” which gives him hope. He says there’s no other option than to negotiate a new contract.

“[Signing a contract] would be retaining your current people, which would then entice laterals or new recruits to come in because you have a fair wage that was up to today’s standards. The other option is, don’t have anything and you lose... it would decimate this department. And I don’t know how the city moves forward.”

Close to a contract?

It appears negotiations are going well. And there’s a general sense from officers who have spoken to the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH that the city is moving in a positive direction with the contract.

[In leaked conversations exclusively obtained by the Jason Rantz Show on KTTH](#), Harrell said he expects to have a contract of substance by the end of the year. His administration, through his deputy mayor and niece Monisha Harrell, says it believes the SPD should be released from its federal consent decree.

“It is very clear that this is not a city that needs the consent decree. That the improvements that have been made The... that this department is a world-class department. And that the federal government knows it. All of our monitoring teams know it. And we’re just trying to cross the T’s and dot the I’s to make sure that we can get out of this so we can move beyond that phase,” Harrell said.

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HEADLINE	09/11 Villages: Russia troops dropped rifles, fled
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/11/kharkiv-liberated-retreat-izyum-russia/
GIST	<p>ZALIZNYCHNE, Ukraine — In the end, the Russians fled any way they could on Friday, on stolen bicycles, disguised as locals. Hours after Ukrainian soldiers poured into the area, hundreds of Russian soldiers encamped in this village were gone, many after their units abandoned them, leaving behind stunned residents to face the ruins of 28 weeks of occupation.</p> <p>“They just dropped rifles on the ground,” Olena Matvienko said Sunday as she stood, still disoriented, in a village littered with ammo crates and torched vehicles, including a Russian tank loaded on a flatbed. The first investigators from Kharkiv had just pulled in to collect the bodies of civilians shot by Russians, some that have been lying exposed for months.</p> <p>“I can’t believe that we went through something like this in the 21st century,” Matvienko said, tears welling.</p>

The hasty flight of Russians from the village was part of a stunning new reality that took the world by surprise over the weekend: The invaders of February are on the run in some parts of Ukraine they seized early in the conflict.

The Russian Defense Ministry's own daily briefing Sunday featured a map showing Russian forces retreating behind the Oskil river on the eastern edge of the Kharkiv region — a day after the ministry confirmed its troops had left the Balakliya and Izyum area in the Kharkiv region, following a decision to “regroup.”

On Sunday, Ukraine's commander in chief, Valery Zaluzhny, said Ukrainian forces had retaken more than 3,000 square kilometers (1,158 miles) of territory, a claim that could not be independently verified, adding that they were advancing to the east, south and north.

“Ukrainian forces have penetrated Russian lines to a depth of up to 70 kilometers in some places,” reported the Institute for the Study of War, which closely tracks the conflict. They have captured more territory in the past five days “than Russian forces have captured in all their operations since April,” its campaign assessment posted Sunday said.

The apparent collapse of the Russian forces has caused shock waves in Moscow. The leader of the Chechen republic, Ramzan Kadyrov, who sent his own fighters to Ukraine, said if there are not immediate changes in Russia's conduct of the invasion, “he would have to contact the leadership of the country to explain to them the real situation on the ground.”

Evidence of the Ukrainian gains continued to emerge Sunday, with images of Ukrainian soldiers raising a flag in central Izyum, after it was abandoned by Russian forces, and similar images from other towns and villages such as Kindrashivka, Chkalovske and Velyki Komyshevakha.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky declined to elaborate on his army's next moves, except to say in a CNN interview, “We will not be standing still. We will be slowly, gradually moving forward.”

In a forceful statement to Russia on Sunday night, Zelensky insisted the invaders would be expelled. “Read my lips,” he said. “Without gas or without you? Without you. Without light or without you? Without you. Without water or without you? Without you. Without food or without you? Without you. Cold, hunger, darkness and thirst are not as scary and deadly for us as your ‘friendship and brotherhood.’ ”

Ukrainians emerged into [the string of just-liberated villages southeast of Kharkiv](#) hailing the end of their ordeal, and wondering whether it is truly over. “Only God knows if they will be back,” said Tamara Kozinska, 75, whose husband was killed by a mortar blast soon after the Russians arrived.

It is not over by any means, military experts warned. Russia still holds about a fifth of Ukraine and continued heavy shelling over the weekend across several regions. And nothing guarantees that Ukraine can keep recaptured areas secure. “A counteroffensive liberates territory and after that you have to control it and be ready to defend it,” Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov cautioned in an interview with the [Financial Times](#).

But as Ukrainian soldiers continued Sunday to sweep deeper into territory that had been held by Russia, more of them were willing to see the campaign as a possible turning point.

In Zaliznychne, a tiny agricultural village 37 miles east of Kharkiv, residents were feeling their way back to normality Sunday, sleeping in bedrooms rather than basements for first the first time in months and trying to make contact with family on the outside.

Kozinska hasn't seen her daughter since February — even though she lives 12 miles away — but had just received word that she will come to pick her up as soon as officials open access to the village, just as the weather turns cold.

“I have been so scared about winter,” said the woman with lung problems, clutching a just-distributed paper giving her a number to call if she finds a land mine. “We have no power and it’s hard for me to collect firewood.”

The first Russian soldiers who set up in the village, turning the sawmill into their base and launching rocket attacks at Ukrainian troops in the next town, had at first not harassed the residents, she said. When they shot pigs on an abandoned farm, they sometimes let residents butcher some of the meat.

But as the occupation ground on, with the Russians rotating out every month, the troops became more aggressive. One of them asked to borrow Kozinska’s phone.

“I gave it to him so he could call his mother, but he took my SIM card,” she said.

One of the medics treated Halyna Noskova’s back after she was hit by mortar shrapnel in her front yard in June. Her 87-year mother pulled out the metal shard. “It was still hot,” she said. The Russian bandaged her up.

“They helped me, but I’m glad we are liberated,” said Noskova, 66.

The residents, all of whom are Russian speaking in this region adjacent to the Russian border, described treatment generally more humane than that experienced by occupied communities farther to the west. The discovery of more than 450 bodies in Bucha, near Kyiv — many showing signs of torture — set off international outrage over atrocities.

“They were not monsters, they were kids,” said Matvienko, who once asked Russian troops to move the tank they parked in front of her house. “I asked what they wanted from us and they said, ‘We can either be here or we can be in jail.’ ”

Others told the villagers they weren’t there to fight Ukraine, but to “protect us from America.”

The Russians’ biggest rule for residents was to get inside by 6 p.m. and stay there, quiet and in the dark, several said. Violating that order could be fatal, as two men on the street learned early on. The friends were drinking and had a light on, said Maria Grygorova, who lives in the attached house next door. The next morning she found them on the floor.

“Konstantyn had two bullet holes in his head,” she said.

She and two friends buried them in the side yard. The same two friends dug them up Sunday, with Ukrainian war crimes investigators looking on.

The team from Kharkiv collected two other bodies during their visit, including a security guard whose remains have been rotting on the floor of a gravel elevator at an asphalt plant for months, even as the Russians used it as a sniper tower. One investigator vomited over a guardrail repeatedly as officers collected the remains.

“We’re here looking into war crimes,” said Serhii Bolvinov, chief investigator of the Kharkiv Regional Police, as his crew waited on demining techs to clear one area of explosives before they could recover some of the bodies.

The residents were scared of the Russians, several village residents said. But they almost pitied them in their scramble to escape the recent Ukrainian onslaught.

Half of the soldiers fled in their vehicles in the first hours of the offensive, they said. Those stranded grew desperate. Some residents overheard their radio pleas to unit commanders for someone to come get them.

	<p>“They said, ‘You’re on your own,’ ” Matvienko recounted. “They came into our houses to take clothes so the drones wouldn’t see them in uniforms. They took our bicycles. Two of them pointed guns at my ex-husband until he handed them his car keys.”</p> <p>Buoyant Ukrainian officials said they would no longer negotiate a peace deal that would let Russia keep an occupying presence in any territory, even in Crimea and part of the eastern Donetsk and Luhansk regions controlled by Russia or Russian-backed separatists for years.</p> <p>“The point of no return has passed,” Reznikov, the defense minister, said at the Yalta European Strategy summit in Kyiv on Saturday.</p> <p>Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Sunday seemed to backtrack on his previous assertion that the time wasn’t right for peace negotiations, as Russia was preparing to stage a round of sham referendums meant to annex occupied territories.</p> <p>“We are not against the talks; we are not refusing the talks,” Lavrov said on the state TV program, “Moscow. Kremlin. Putin.” Rather, “Those who refuse should understand that the longer they delay this process, the more difficult it will be to negotiate.”</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 China lockdown: plea for food, medical care
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/12/china-covid-lockdown-xinjiang-food/
GIST	<p>BEIJING — Frantic appeals for food and medical care are spreading across China in a grim deja vu, as tens of millions of people are put under weeks-long coronavirus lockdowns ahead of a key meeting of the ruling Communist Party.</p> <p>While much of the world is moving past the pandemic, China remains stuck, with leader Xi Jinping continuing orders to maintain “zero covid.” These lockdowns are keeping localized outbreaks from spreading, but are taking an enormous economic and psychological toll on the population.</p> <p>Xi is set to begin a third five-year term next month, breaking the precedent of stepping down after two terms. Lockdowns are expected to continue at least through that meeting, the 20th National Chinese Communist Party Congress.</p> <p>Vice Premier Sun Chunlan said on Friday that some sweeping covid controls should be narrowed, without giving a time frame, but she also emphasized the importance of preventing large-scale outbreaks ahead of the congress, according to the state-run Xinhua News Agency.</p> <p>Some of the worst reports are coming out of Ili prefecture in China’s northwestern Xinjiang region, where a lockdown began early last month.</p> <p>“We’ve been locked up in our home for more than 40 days. We are short of everything, especially food,” said Gulnazar, an Ili resident, who only gave her given name because of security concerns. “There are so many difficulties, I feel like crying just by mentioning them.”</p> <p>Gulnazar said local authorities locked their apartment door from the outside, and only opened it when medical workers came to do coronavirus tests.</p> <p>In some cities, neighborhood committees have delivered free groceries to those in lockdown. But Gulnazar said their neighborhood committee has only been offering to sell them food at higher-than-normal prices, and they didn’t do so often. The last time they came to Gulnazar’s door was 11 days ago, she said.</p> <p>“We only eat naan and congee,” she said, referring to flatbread and porridge. “There is no milk or vegetables.”</p>

Others in Ili posted online about being unable to take sick children to the hospital, and even the deaths of family members in lockdown. The reports were widely circulated on Chinese social media, but could not be immediately verified by The Washington Post.

The Ili government apologized on Friday for problems in the lockdown response, but also rejected some reports as rumors, including one of an old man committing suicide. Ili police announced Sunday that four people had been punished with five to 10 days' detention each for "spreading rumors" about the lockdown, and warned residents to watch their words.

China's official case count remains minuscule, with only 949 locally transmitted cases reported nationwide on Sunday, in a population of 1.4 billion.

The economic hardship of the lockdowns has drawn widespread complaint from residents who are unable to work and are surviving on dwindling savings. The public dissatisfaction is a challenge for Xi, who has sought to project an image as a populist leader, and declared poverty elimination a central goal of his administration.

In southwestern Guiyang, which began a lockdown in parts of the city Sept. 5, residents reported online on Monday that they were struggling to secure food. "All supermarkets and small stores where you can buy groceries are closed," one wrote on Weibo. "The online shopping platforms designated by the government are also having shortages and you cannot buy stuff or receive deliveries."

A Guizhou wildlife park put out a public plea last week for food to keep its tigers, pandas and other wild animals fed.

Tibet's capital Lhasa began locking down parts of the city early last month. In one post that was widely shared on Weibo, someone in Tibet claimed to have been unable to bathe for 12 days in a quarantine center.

These scenes are reminiscent of Shanghai's two-month lockdown this year, which plunged residents of one of China's wealthiest cities into a struggle for survival. With supply chains broken down, residents made urgent pleas for food, and begged for sick family members to be allowed out of lockdown to go to hospitals.

The Shanghai government acknowledged several people died from medical emergencies in the lockdown.

China's pandemic response drew praise in some quarters, with the lockdowns saving lives at a time when there were no vaccines. But as effective vaccines have been rolled out, and the virus has emerged in more-infectious but less-deadly variants, criticism of China's "zero covid" approach has mounted.

State media have steadfastly praised the policy, saying it shows China's government is not willing to accept mass covid deaths like Western democracies have done.

Beijing's leaders say they want to ease their way back to normal, but so far, it's unclear when and how this will happen. The government has eased some of its controls this year, such as shortening quarantine for those entering the country to a week, and making it easier to travel between provinces.

But cities suffering outbreaks have snapped back into lockdown, with municipal officials often fired or punished afterward.

Beijing has maintained the country cannot stop the lockdowns because a substantial portion of the population, especially the elderly, is still unvaccinated. China has also refused to import the most effective foreign vaccines for coronavirus, relying on domestic ones that provide less immunity.

The government has suppressed much of the domestic criticism of the "zero covid" policy, including through censorship and detentions.

	Even in Chinese cities without outbreaks, pandemic controls disrupt daily life. In cities like Beijing, residents must obtain a negative coronavirus test result every three days to be able to enter office buildings, restaurants and other public spaces.
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HEADLINE	09/12 Iran nuclear weapons breakout time: zero
SOURCE	https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20220912-iran-nuclear-weapons-breakout-time-remains-at-zero
GIST	<p>A new report from the Institute for Science and International Security summarizes and assesses information in the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) quarterly safeguards report for 7 September 2022. The main finding: Iran's breakout time, that is, the time between a political decision to produce a nuclear weapon and the completion of such weapon, remains at zero. Iran has more than enough 60 percent enriched uranium, or highly enriched uranium (HEU), in the form of uranium hexafluoride (UF6) to fashion a nuclear explosive. If Iran wanted to further enrich its 60 percent HEU up to 90 percent weapons-grade uranium (WGU), which is used in Iran's known nuclear weapons designs, it could do so within weeks by utilizing only a few of the advanced centrifuge cascades it has in its possession.</p> <p>The report was written by David Albright, the President and Founder of the Institute for Science and International Security; Sarah Burkhard, a Research Associate at the Institute for Science and International Security; and Andrea Stricker, the deputy director of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies' (FDD) Nonproliferation and Biodefense Program and an FDD research fellow.</p> <p>Here are the Background and Findings of the Institute's report:</p> <p>Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · This report summarizes and assesses information in the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) quarterly safeguards report for September 7, 2022, <i>Verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)</i>, including Iran's compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). · Iran's breakout time remains at zero. It has more than enough 60 percent enriched uranium, or highly enriched uranium (HEU) in the form of uranium hexafluoride (UF6) to directly fashion a nuclear explosive. If Iran wanted to further enrich its 60 percent HEU up to 90 percent weapons-grade uranium (WGU), used in Iran's known nuclear weapons designs, it could do so within weeks utilizing only a few advanced centrifuge cascades. · Iran is learning important lessons in breaking out to nuclear weapons, including by experimenting with skipping typical enrichment steps as it enriches up to 60 percent uranium-235, and building and testing equipment to feed 20 percent enriched uranium and withdraw HEU. It is starting from a level below 5 percent LEU and enriching directly to near 60 percent in one cascade, rather than using two steps in between, a slower process entailing the intermediate production of 20 percent enriched uranium. It has used temporary feed and withdrawal setups to produce HEU from near 20 percent enriched uranium feed. Iran is also enriching uranium in one IR-6 cascade modified to switch more easily from the production of 5 percent enriched uranium to 20 percent enriched uranium. As such, Iran is experimenting with multi-step enrichment while seeking to shortcut the process. · Combined with Iran's refusal to resolve outstanding Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) safeguards violations, the IAEA has a significantly reduced ability to monitor Iran's complex and growing nuclear program, which notably has unresolved nuclear weapons dimensions. The IAEA's ability to detect diversion of nuclear materials, equipment, and other capabilities to undeclared facilities remains greatly diminished. <p>Findings</p>

- Due to the growth of Iran's 60 percent and 20 percent enriched uranium stocks, Iran can now produce enough WGU for three nuclear weapons in one month.
- Within one month, including a setup period, Iran could produce enough WGU for a second and third nuclear explosive also using all of its existing stock of near 20 percent enriched uranium. Whether or not Iran enriches its HEU up to 90 percent, it can have enough HEU for three nuclear weapons within one month after starting breakout.
- In essence, Iran has effectively broken out slowly by accumulating 60 percent enriched uranium. As of August 21, Iran had a stock of 55.6 kilograms (kg) (in uranium mass or U mass) of near 60 percent enriched uranium in UF₆ form, or 82.2 kg (in hexafluoride mass or hex mass). Iran also has 2 kg of 60 percent HEU in chemical forms other than UF₆.
- Iran keeps two-thirds of its stock of 60 percent HEU at the Esfahan site, where it maintains a capability to make enriched uranium metal. Although Iran has stated that it is using the HEU to make targets for irradiation in the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR), it has converted only a small fraction of its HEU into targets – about 2.1 kg – and has not converted more since March 2022.
- Iran's current production rate of 60 percent enriched uranium is 3.9 kg per month (U mass) using two advanced centrifuge cascades and up to 5 percent low enriched uranium (LEU) as feed.
- Iran is now enriching uranium to 20 percent in both cascades of IR-6 centrifuges at the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant (FFEP). It is also operating six IR-1 cascades (three sets of two interconnected cascades) that were already producing 20 percent enriched uranium. The presence of advanced centrifuges at the FFEP enhances Iran's ability to break out using a declared but highly fortified facility.
- The production rate of 20 percent enriched uranium at the FFEP increased by almost 50 percent, from 19.9 kg to 29 kg (U mass) per month, or 29.4 kg and 42 kg (hex mass) per month.
- As of August 21, Iran had an IAEA-estimated stock of 331.9 kg of 20 percent enriched uranium (U mass and in the form of UF₆). Iran also has an additional stock of 30.8 kg (U mass) of 20 percent uranium in other chemical forms.
- At the Natanz Fuel Enrichment Plant (FEP), Iran has installed 36 cascades of IR-1 centrifuges, six cascades of IR-2m centrifuges, two cascades of IR-4 centrifuges, and, newly, three cascades of IR-6 centrifuges. A third IR-4 cascade was still being installed, and newly, four additional IR-2m cascades were being installed.
- Iran's current, total operating enrichment capability is estimated to be about 16,600 separative work units (SWU) per year, compared to 12,600 SWU per year at the end of the last reporting period.
- Average daily production of 5 percent LEU increased accordingly at the FEP, but Iran's total usable stock of below 5 percent LEU continued to decrease, due to the high rate of its use as feedstock at the PFEP and FFEP.
- Iran's overall reported stockpile of LEU continued to rise due to an increase in Iran's stock of up to 2 percent enriched uranium, much of which was produced as tails in the production of 20 percent and 60 percent enriched uranium.
- Since the previous report, a February 2021 agreement between Iran and the IAEA collapsed, which had extended certain JCPOA monitoring measures such as the use of surveillance cameras and safeguards data collection devices. Iran had agreed to continue operating IAEA equipment and collect the information but keep the data in its custody. In June, following an IAEA Board of Governors censure of Iran for non-compliance with its safeguards obligations, Iran demanded the IAEA remove 27 video cameras and other electronic monitoring devices.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The IAEA reports that it faces serious challenges in re-establishing continuity of knowledge about Iran's activities, such as centrifuge production and production of heavy water. For more than 12 weeks, the IAEA has not been able to monitor Iran's activities, and should it receive past footage and data, has an enormous task to sift through some 1.5 years of video footage. The IAEA also details the remedial measures it will need to take in order to re-establish a centrifuge manufacturing baseline, including access to extensive records. · The IAEA also faces a gap in knowledge about Iran's advanced centrifuge manufacturing activities at the former TESA Karaj facility from June 2021 until January 2022, raising doubt about its ability to ascertain whether Iran may have diverted centrifuge components. · The IAEA warns, "Even if all records were provided by Iran, additional safeguards measures were applied by the Agency, and the recovered data proved to be comprehensive and accurate, considerable challenges would remain to confirm the consistency of Iran's declared inventory of centrifuges and heavy water with the situation prior to 21 February 2022." · The IAEA concludes that "Iran's decision to remove all of the Agency's equipment previously installed in Iran for surveillance and monitoring activities in relation to the JCPOA has also had detrimental implications for the Agency's ability to provide assurance of the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program."
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HEADLINE	09/11 Stunned: Moscow admits losing key region
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/11/world/europe/ukraine-kharkiv-russian-retreat.html
GIST	<p>KHARKIV, Ukraine — Stunned by a lightning advance by Ukrainian forces that cost it over 1,000 square miles of land and a key military hub, Russia on Sunday acknowledged that it had lost nearly all of the northern region of Kharkiv after a blitzkrieg thrust that cast doubt on a premise — widely held in Moscow and parts of the West — that Ukraine could never defeat Russia.</p> <p>Russia's pell-mell retreat from a wide section of Ukrainian territory it seized in the early summer rattled Kremlin cheerleaders and amplified voices in the West demanding that more weapons be sent to Ukraine so that it could win.</p> <p>Victory for Ukraine is still far from certain, particularly with a second Ukrainian offensive in the south making far less rapid progress. Russian forces are dug into strong defensive positions near the Black Sea port city of Kherson, forcing Ukrainian troops to pay heavily for every foot of territory they retake.</p> <p>But the speed of Ukraine's advances over the weekend in the northeast — an area used by Russia as a stronghold — has muted the gung-ho bluster of Kremlin cheerleaders. It has also undermined arguments in places like Germany that providing more and better arms to Ukraine would only lead to a long and bloody stalemate against a Russian military destined to win.</p> <p>Late Sunday, in a strike that Ukrainian officials condemned as a fit of pique over its losses, Moscow attacked infrastructure facilities in Kharkiv, leaving many civilians without power and water. President Volodymyr Zelensky said there was a "total blackout" in the regions of Kharkiv and Donetsk.</p> <p>"No military facilities," he wrote on Twitter. "The goal is to deprive people of light and heat."</p> <p>Russia's retreat in the northeast is the biggest embarrassment for President Vladimir V. Putin's larger and better equipped forces since their attempt to seize Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital, was repelled at the start of the invasion. Amid heavy casualties, logistical problems and declining morale in Russia's military, its performance has prompted discontent among pro-Kremlin bloggers and staunch Putin loyalists, creating new challenges for the Russian leader.</p>

Among them is the collapse of a widespread assumption, both inside and outside Russia, that Russia would inevitably triumph in the end. On Sunday, Ukraine's defense ministry claimed that its forces had advanced to a checkpoint near the Russian border in northeastern Ukraine, Hoptivka, an assertion that could not be independently confirmed.

Ukrainian allies rejoiced at Russia's battlefield setbacks.

"Let me be frank," said Gabrielius Landsbergis, the foreign minister of Lithuania, one of Ukraine's most steadfast supporters. "It is now beyond doubt that Ukraine could have thrown Russia out months ago if they had been provided with the necessary equipment from Day 1."

Speaking at a news conference with his German counterpart, Ukraine's foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, said, "And so I reiterate: The more weapons we receive, the faster we will win, and the faster this war will end."

Ukraine's rapid gains followed [increased intelligence sharing with the United States](#), American officials said. Over the summer, as they planned their counteroffensive in the northeast, Ukrainian officials began to offer more real-time intelligence to their American counterparts, a shift that allowed the United States to provide better and more relevant information about Russian weaknesses, officials said.

American officials welcomed Ukraine's rapid advance as a heartening development. But senior Pentagon and White House officials urged caution, voicing doubts about the capacity of Ukrainian forces to push Russia back to the lines that existed on Feb. 23, the day before the invasion. Still, they said that the progress suggested the Russian forces were in significant disarray.

For months now, administration officials have said there is no hope of a diplomatic solution to the war unless Mr. Zelensky's forces win back enough territory to have the upper hand in any negotiated cease-fire or armistice. But the fear is that if Mr. Putin believes he is losing the war, he may deploy unconventional weapons.

Military analysts are debating whether Ukraine's successes in the north were the result of an ingenious ruse aimed at diverting Russia's strength toward the south. A Ukrainian counteroffensive there that was telegraphed for weeks may have been partly a feint, they say.

In a sign of the shock, and even despair, spreading through the ranks of the war's most vocal supporters in Russia, Ramzan Kadyrov, the strongman leader of Chechnya and a staunch Putin loyalist, criticized the Russian Army's leadership on Sunday and expressed dismay over its performance in northeastern Ukraine.

Russia's ministry of defense had "made mistakes," he said in a post on social media, and the military and national leadership needed to explain "the real situation on the ground."

But far from acknowledging the setbacks, the official journal of the Russian government, Rossiskaya Gazeta, headlined its main war report on Sunday with an account of how the "Kyiv regime" had suffered heavy casualties. It claimed that more than 4,000 Ukrainian soldiers had been killed from Tuesday to Saturday.

And the authorities in Moscow presented the rout in the northeast as a planned "regrouping."

The Institute for the Study of War, a research group in Washington, gave a starkly different assessment. In a report, it said that Russia's northern front was "collapsing" and dismissed claims by Moscow that its troops had simply been ordered to "regroup."

Russian forces, the institute said, "are not conducting a controlled withdrawal and are hurriedly fleeing."

In Kyiv, the mood was euphoric.

“We’ve been waiting for this for a long time,” said Rumil Khabibulin, an actor. “My wife, my children, me — all of our spirits are lifted. I think it’s a big turning point in the war, and Russia will fall apart.”

With nearly all news outlets in Russia in the grip of the Kremlin, however, there was little sign of eroding public support for Mr. Putin or for the war that the Kremlin insists on describing as a “special military operation.”

Schooled from childhood about how the armies of Napoleon and then Hitler won battles all the way to Moscow only to be crushed in the end, many Russians are programmed to believe official claims that their country, no matter what the setbacks of the moment, is marching to eventual victory.

Few people have much knowledge of Russia’s catastrophic 1904-5 war with Japan, which, like the invasion of Ukraine, was driven by imperial hubris and contempt for an enemy that Czar Nicholas II expected to crumble in a “short, victorious war.” Russia lost much of its navy and suffered total defeat at the hands of Japan, a humiliation that helped fuel Russia’s 1905 revolution.

For the moment, the Kremlin is sticking to breezy denials of defeats and business-as-usual insouciance by Mr. Putin, who, as Russian lines buckled on Saturday in the Kharkiv region, inaugurated a giant Ferris wheel in a Moscow park. Reports from social media said the wheel quickly broke down, leaving riders stranded in the air.

After presiding over festive fireworks on Saturday celebrating the 875th anniversary of Moscow’s founding, Mr. Putin turned his attention back to his war in Ukraine on Sunday, when, according to a Kremlin statement, he spoke by phone with President Emmanuel Macron of France, their first conversation since Aug. 19.

While insisting that it had inflicted serious damage on Ukrainian forces, the defense ministry in Moscow obliquely acknowledged that the war was not going according to plan. It released a map on Sunday that indicated Russian troops had been driven from nearly all of the Kharkiv region and now controlled only a sliver of land on its eastern edge along the Oskil River.

One Russian military blogger, Yuri Podolyaka, reported that Russian forces had been ordered to evacuate the entire region. No such order has been confirmed, but Russian forces, thrown into disarray by the pace of Ukraine’s advance, are clearly now focused on preventing losses in the adjacent regions of Luhansk and Donetsk.

Other Russian military bloggers, who generally cheer the war effort but also offer a less varnished take on reality on the ground than state media outlets, reported that Ukraine was now attacking the small city of Lyman, seized by Russia in May, and that Russian forces there were in need of reinforcements.

Lyman’s mayor, Oleksandr Zhuravlev, told the Ukrainian news media that as of Saturday night, the fight was still underway. “The Russian military is still resisting,” he said. “Our flag is not there yet.”

The capture of Lyman would be another serious reversal of fortunes for Russia, whose seizure of the city in early summer presaged what at the time seemed like an inexorable and irreversible Russian campaign to conquer the area, including the bigger nearby towns of Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk.

On Sunday, Mr. Zelensky claimed that Ukrainian forces had recaptured Chkalovske, a village in the Kharkiv region that lies roughly halfway between Izium, an important Russian military hub seized back by Ukraine on Saturday, and Ukraine’s second-largest city, Kharkiv, which has been struck repeatedly by Russian forces.

Suggesting the blitz still has room to run, Serhiy Grabskyi, a former Ukrainian army colonel and commentator on the war for Ukrainian news media, said that when troops fell back in disarray, as

	<p>Russians were now doing, they tend to unnerve the soldiers they encounter as they fled. “They will spread demoralization to other troops,” he said.</p> <p>But reaching too far could leave the Ukrainian Army stretched thin and vulnerable, Mr. Grabskyi warned. “Now — and it’s painful for me to say as a Ukrainian — we have to decide where to stop,” he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Russia’s retreat undercuts Putin’s image
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/11/world/europe/ukraine-russias-retreat-putin.html
GIST	<p>Ukraine’s rout of Russian forces this weekend is creating a new kind of political challenge for President Vladimir V. Putin: It undercuts the image of competence and might that he has worked for two decades to build.</p> <p>On Sunday, the Russian military continued to retreat from positions in northeastern Ukraine that it had occupied for months. State television news reports referred to the retreat as a carefully planned “regrouping operation,” praising the heroism and professionalism of Russian troops.</p> <p>But the upbeat message did little to dampen the anger among supporters of the war over the retreat and the Kremlin’s handling of it. And it hardly obscured the bind that Mr. Putin now finds himself in, presiding over a six-month war against an increasingly energized enemy and a Russian populace that does not appear to be prepared for the sacrifices that could come with an escalating conflict.</p> <p>“Strength is the only source of Putin’s legitimacy,” Abbas Gallyamov, a former speechwriter for Mr. Putin who is now a political consultant living in Israel, said in a phone interview. “And in a situation in which it turns out that he has no strength, his legitimacy will start dropping toward zero.”</p> <p>As Ukraine pressed its advantage on Sunday, seizing towns and territory, Mr. Putin escalated the brutality of his campaign, a concession to the pro-war voices on Russian television and social media. Missile strikes on infrastructure across eastern and central Ukraine plunged parts of the country into darkness.</p> <p>But it was unclear how far Russia — with its cyber, chemical and nuclear arsenals — might be willing to go to halt Ukraine’s momentum, even as the scale of the battlefield setback became clearer and more evidence emerged of disarray inside Russia’s ruling class.</p> <p>Ramzan Kadyrov, the strongman leader of the Chechnya region in southern Russia that has sent thousands of its own troops to Ukraine, accused the Russian military of making “mistakes” and failing to explain the retreat to the public. Sergei Mironov, the leader of a pro-Putin party in Parliament, criticized the authorities for celebrating Moscow’s annual City Day this weekend, posting on Twitter: “It cannot be and it should not be that our guys are dying today, and we are pretending that nothing is happening!”</p> <p>“Because of some mistakes unknown to us, control over political processes is being lost,” a pro-Kremlin analyst who often appears on state television, Sergei Markov, said on social media. “I guarantee you that this confusion will not last long. But right now, it’s a mess.”</p> <p>The fundamental problem, analysts said, is that Mr. Putin’s penchant for misleading his own people is catching up to him. The reality of the Russian setback is poking holes in the Kremlin’s message that the Russian Army is undefeatable, Ukraine is riddled with corruption and cowardice and Mr. Putin is a brilliant geopolitical strategist. It was just last Wednesday that Mr. Putin declared that Russia had “not lost anything” as a result of the war, an assertion at odds with Western estimates of tens of thousands of Russian casualties.</p> <p>For now, the war’s supporters have mainly directed their anger over this weekend’s setbacks at Moscow bureaucrats or at the military leadership. But an early indication that the frustration could damage Mr. Putin’s own prestige came on the Telegram social network after Moscow went ahead with a grand</p>

fireworks display on Saturday evening to mark the 875th anniversary of the city's founding — a slap in the face to the Russian military, some said, on perhaps the most humiliating day for Russia since the invasion began on Feb. 24.

"We won't support this government in the 2024 elections," the administrators of a pro-war Telegram account with more than 400,000 followers [said](#), referring to Russia's next presidential election. "It's been a long time coming, but this is the last drop."

The discontent was evident even in Moscow, a city that the authorities have worked to shield from the costs of war.

As Moscow residents celebrated the city's birthday this weekend with concerts and block parties, Vladislav, a taxi driver who moved to a city near Moscow from the Krasnoyarsk region in Siberia looked upon all of the celebratory flags and stages with a bit of scorn. He said his 34-year-old cousin had been killed two weeks ago near Donetsk in Ukraine's Donbas region, after having been conscripted into the pro-Russian forces.

"Here, people are drinking late through the night," he complained on Sunday morning after a weekend of revelry in the city. "No one cares about what is happening on the front."

Tatiana Stanovaya, a Russian political analyst, said that the Kremlin's decision to play down the intensity and scale of the war in Ukraine had created parallel worlds: the reality of Europe's biggest land war in generations on the one hand, and the business-as-usual atmosphere in Moscow on the other.

The strategy to describe the war as a "special military operation" that need not affect most Russians' daily lives relied on the expectation that Russia would quickly win it, she said. But with setback after setback, the fact that things are not going according to plan is becoming increasingly difficult to hide.

"The Kremlin, in principle, based its entire policy on the idea that there can be no defeats," she said. "They didn't prepare for the fact that there could be a collision with this second parallel world."

There were signs Sunday evening that the Kremlin was responding to the criticism that it was not being honest with the public about the extent of the recent setbacks. On the main weekly news show on state television, the presenter Dmitri Kiselyov described the last week as "probably one of the most difficult" since the start of the war.

"Under the onslaught of superior enemy forces, the allied forces were forced to leave the previously liberated settlements," Mr. Kiselyov said, referring to Russia's "alliance" with Kremlin-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine.

It was a rare acknowledgment on the airwaves of what pro-Russian military bloggers have been warning about for weeks. With the Kremlin appearing [determined to avoid a nationwide draft](#) to increase the ranks of its army, Russia's forces are outnumbered by the Ukrainians in many parts of the front line.

There were also signs that the Kremlin could be trying to escalate its military campaign, as supporters of the war have long said it should. A Russian strike knocked out power and water Sunday evening to much of the northeastern city of Kharkiv, the city's mayor said, referring to the attack as an act of "revenge."

"It seems it's time to get rough," the host Vladimir Solovyov said on his state television talk show earlier on Sunday, complaining that Russia had not done enough to break Ukraine's military and fuel supply lines. "It's just time to get rough."

How badly this weekend's battlefield setbacks hurt Mr. Putin politically will depend most of all, of course, on his ability to reverse them, while continuing to shelter Russians from the consequences of Western sanctions. This week, Mr. Putin is expected to meet with President Xi Jinping of China at a regional

	<p>summit in Uzbekistan, seeking to expand a critical relationship for Russia as it pursues economic partners outside the West.</p> <p>Mr. Gallyamov, the former speechwriter, said the struggles in Ukraine could lead the elites around the Russian president to push for a successor to be appointed.</p> <p>“If they continue to destroy the Russian army as actively as they are now,” Mr. Gallyamov said of Ukraine’s forces, “then all this can accelerate even faster.”</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Persistent rains pummel Chicago; flooding
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/11/us/chicago-rain-flash-flooding.html
GIST	<p>CHICAGO — Torrential, unrelenting rains swept through Chicago on Sunday, flooding basements and alleys, closing grocery stores and restaurants, and leaving cars floating under viaducts on streets impassable with deep water.</p> <p>The extreme weather took the city by surprise, particularly the North Side of Chicago. Close to five inches of rain had fallen by late afternoon, according to Kevin Doom, a meteorologist for the National Weather Service.</p> <p>“This has been a mess,” he said. “The water rose pretty quickly this morning, so it caught a lot of people off guard.”</p> <p>At some intersections, cars were stranded in the rainwater after motorists drove through suddenly flooded roads. Homeowners whose basements had not seen water in years were unpleasantly surprised to discover that rainwater had surged up through drains, in some cases leaving an ankle-deep flood carrying a pungent smell of sewage. Grocery stores dealing with flooding closed their doors, and some businesses could not open at all.</p> <p>To prevent more flooding, Mayor Lori Lightfoot advised Chicagoans not to run dishwashers or washing machines. She also said people should avoid swimming in Lake Michigan because of high waves and dangerous conditions.</p> <p>Chicago is prone to flash flooding when its sewer system becomes inundated, but this storm placed unusual stress on the city, officials and residents said.</p> <p>“What happened today was a really heavy downpour, really quickly, in a way that appeared to have overwhelmed some of the sewer infrastructure,” Andre Vasquez, an alderman who represents a ward on the North Side, said. “It’s a trend. We need to figure out how to adapt, planting more rain gardens and native species, having more green space that can absorb more of the runoff water.”</p> <p>Rain was continuing throughout the later afternoon and evening, and was not expected to let up until Monday.</p> <p>Michael Roper, owner of Hopleaf, a bar and restaurant in the Andersonville neighborhood on the North Side, said that he was forced to shut down the restaurant for lunch service on Sunday after the basement flooded during the first surge of rain.</p> <p>“It’s been a rough day,” Mr. Roper said. In the morning, employees rushed into the restaurant — but instead of prepping for lunch, they grabbed mops and buckets to clean up.</p> <p>In 30 years of running the restaurant, he said, this kind of flooding has forced a closure perhaps a half dozen times. He added that the city needed to update its infrastructure to respond to increased rainstorms, even though it has been spared the extreme weather seen in much of the country.</p>

	“Everything like this is extra exhausting right now,” he said. “Chicago is becoming a climate change destination. But things still happen. There’s tornadoes, here’s wind storms, there’s lightning. And there’s rain like today.”
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HEADLINE	09/12 Monkeypox shots, treatments unavailable
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/12/health/monkeypox-vaccines-treatments-equity.html
GIST	<p>For the past month, a couple of patients a day have sat across from Dr. Alberto Mendoza at the H.I.V. clinic where he works in Lima, Peru, to hear him confirm what they had feared: They have monkeypox. The men are tormented by the painful lesions the virus causes. They’re also afraid, because the visible sores mark them as men who have sex with men, a dangerous identity in Peru, where there is intense discrimination against homosexuality.</p> <p>But Dr. Mendoza, an infectious disease specialist, has little to offer. “I have no options,” he said in an interview. Neither the antiviral drug nor the vaccine being used against monkeypox in the United States and Europe is available in Peru.</p> <p>“We have nothing, even though we are the country with one of the highest numbers of cases by population,” said Dr. Mendoza, who works with the medical charity Partners in Health.</p> <p>Neighboring Brazil, which, according to the World Health Organization, has close to 10 percent of global monkeypox cases, currently has no vaccine or treatment either. Nor do the countries in West and Central Africa that have struggled with monkeypox outbreaks for decades.</p> <p>The scramble for monkeypox vaccines and treatments has been centered in the United States and Europe, where supplies of shots have stretched thin or nearly run out. But more than 100 countries are now reporting monkeypox cases, and a vast majority of those have had no vaccine or treatments at all.</p> <p>They have been shut out by the prohibitive cost and by wealthy nations who bought up most of the available doses. The United States already controlled most of the vaccine, which was originally developed for smallpox, as part of its bioweapons strategy after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Some public health groups are also criticizing the W.H.O. for not doing more to ensure swift movement on equitable access to tests, treatments and vaccines, after it declared monkeypox a public health emergency of international concern on July 23. They say the issues echo those seen with Covid, but without any of the mechanisms that were developed to try to right the balance during the coronavirus pandemic.</p> <p>It is difficult to even know the number of people who have monkeypox in developing nations because many lack capacity for diagnosing the disease, which is done with a P.C.R. test. Most of the testing in countries that have had outbreaks for years is done at the surveillance level, testing only a sampling of the population to find the overall incidence of the disease. Testing to diagnose individual patients, many of whom live in isolated rural areas, is rare or nonexistent.</p> <p>“We don’t have access to testing in Africa so we don’t know where cases are, so you can’t use that as a basis for decisions on the use of resources,” said Dr. Boghuma Titanji, an assistant professor of medicine at Emory University who responded to a monkeypox outbreak in 2018 in her native Cameroon.</p> <p>Most people who die from monkeypox are Africans. There are two different strains of the disease, a more lethal one circulating in the Democratic Republic of Congo and neighboring countries, and a less virulent version in West Africa, which is the one now being seen in high-income countries. Though deaths from monkeypox are rare, the risk of a fatal case is greatest in children and pregnant women, and the disease is excruciatingly painful for anyone infected.</p> <p>The rapid spread of the disease to high-income nations, beginning four months ago, set off a scramble for vaccines. While there is no shot specifically for monkeypox, data from trials with nonhuman primates suggested that vaccines against the closely related smallpox virus might also prevent transmission of this</p>

one. The focus became the Jynneos smallpox vaccine made by the Danish firm Bavarian-Nordic, which is the easiest to administer of several smallpox vaccines and has the lowest number of side effects.

Bavarian-Nordic had approximately 16 million doses of the vaccine, most of which were owned by or contracted to the United States, [which contributed more than \\$1 billion to develop the vaccine as a defense strategy after 9/11](#) when officials feared small pox could be used as a bioweapon. Those U.S. doses were earmarked as a defense stockpile and in the form of bulk drug, not bottled vaccines, which slowed distribution. The roughly 1 million that remained were quickly purchased by Canada, Australia and European countries starting in May.

There are no doses purchased or ordered for African countries to date. A clinical trial of the Jynneos vaccine led by the National Institutes of Health is beginning in Congo but that country has no vaccine supply available for health workers or contacts of people who fall ill.

“The obvious solution for this problem is for the U.S. government to put all of the doses it owns — more than 15 million — into vials, so they can go into arms, in the U.S. and elsewhere,” said James Krellenstein, a founder of PrEP4All, a medicines access advocacy group. “This is the single most important step that anyone can take to help bring this outbreak under control globally.”

None of the 7 million doses sent for bottling so far is designated for global access.

An analysis by the advocacy organization Public Citizen estimates that the high-income countries that have snapped up the Jynneos vaccine are paying \$110 per dose. Paul Chaplin, Bavarian-Nordic’s president, said in an earnings call last month that the vaccine had one price in all markets, which would be discounted only for high-volume purchasers.

“For a country like Peru, this is just too expensive,” Dr. Mendoza, in Lima, said.

The Latin American arm of the W.H.O. has secured a donation of a small number of doses for that region; Brazil’s ministry of health confirmed that it expected to receive 50,000 of them.

Public health groups say the W.H.O.’s efforts send an unhelpful mixed message.

“Despite the declaration of the public health emergency, there is a lack of clear guidance from the W.H.O.,” on a strategy for getting vaccines, treatments and tests to countries that need them, Mr. Krellenstein said. “It doesn’t seem prudent to declare an emergency without saying anything about the tools to respond.”

Dr. Sylvie Briand, the director of the W.H.O.’s epidemic and pandemic preparedness and prevention department, said the global response to monkeypox was complicated by the fact that most of the medical interventions lacked human clinical trial data, and did not have regulatory approval.

“People think that because it’s an emergency it will be a matter of days, but for all those things it’s a matter of week or months,” she said. “We are trying to shorten the time between each step and make it happen faster. But it’s not so easy. You have to make sure something is safe and effective.”

The antiviral drug tecovirimat, marketed in the United States as Tpoxx, has been safety-tested in humans, and its efficacy against monkeypox has been tested in nonhuman primates. Two human clinical trials to test against monkeypox are underway, the first of which should report data early next year. But the current lack of human data means the W.H.O. cannot do the typical prequalification process that helps countries speed up authorization of a drug.

“The original sin of this whole pandemic is that we could have tested these things in endemic countries, and then we would have the data,” said Dr. Ranu Dhillon, an infectious disease expert and instructor at Harvard Medical School. But there was little appetite or investment in monkeypox when only countries such as Cameroon and Central African Republic were affected, he said.

In the absence of vaccines, tecovirimat could potentially help to slow the spread of the virus by reducing symptoms and making patients less infectious, Dr. Mendoza said. Dr. Briand of the W.H.O. said that while the experience of Covid had created a preoccupation with vaccination, it was typically easier to manufacture, test and distribute diagnostics and treatments than vaccines. These would be a logical focus of the initial response, along with behavior change interventions such as encouraging men to reduce their number of sexual partners.

But cost could be an issue too. Tecovirimat is made by Siga Technologies, a New York company that for years produced batches of it only to sell to the U.S. government for its national security reserves for smallpox. The company would not disclose pricing information to The New York Times, but in April, Canada signed a contract to purchase the drug at \$920 per course.

“We want this drug to have broad access,” Dr. Phil Gomez, Siga’s chief executive officer, said.

Dr. Gomez said that Siga could produce 500,000 courses per year, and that it had product available to ship from its warehouses now, although he would not say how much. The company would be open to expanding production with more contract manufacturers, he said, “with the help of the U.S. government.”

Developing and manufacturing a rapid diagnostic test that can be used in clinical settings in low-income countries must now be a top priority, Dr. Dhillon said. “Early detection is the chance to break off transmission.”

The role of smallpox as a potential bioweapons threat has complicated the global monkeypox response. There are limits on transparency with data about vaccine and treatment stockpiles, which are considered national security issues, and access to the biomedical interventions is controlled by defense experts rather than public health ones.

“It was a biodefense issue,” Dr. Briand said, “and so the lines of command and the decision-making processes that were established for that are different than for the kind of outbreaks we are currently seeing.”

Mr. Krellenstein said he felt that not everyone in the research world shared the sense of urgency that pushed the W.H.O. director general, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, to declare the emergency.

“The reaction seems to be, ‘Nobody is dying so it’s not a security threat’ — and it’s gay people and trans people and Africans who are sick — so it seems very academic” to the national security decision makers who control access to the vaccine stockpile, he said.

Many public health experts say that a lethargic monkeypox response, predicated on the analysis that few people are dying in this outbreak, ignores the risks posed by this virus that is behaving in ways not seen before.

“Monkeypox really has a huge runway right now to better adapt,” Dr. Titanji said. “It’s a bad thing to not get on top of another pox virus circulating in human beings.”

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HEADLINE	09/12 Day 201 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/12/ukraine-russia-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-201-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Russia targeted infrastructure facilities in central and eastern Ukraine on Sunday evening in a response to a dramatic Ukrainian counteroffensive in Kharkiv province that has reshaped the war and left Moscow reeling. The mayor of Kharkiv city, Ihor Terekhov, said a strike had knocked out power and water to much of the city, in what he described as an act of “revenge” by Russia for Ukraine’s recent battlefield successes. There were reports of blackouts

in Dnipro, Poltava and other eastern cities, potentially affecting millions of civilians. “A total blackout in the Kharkiv and Donetsk regions, a partial one in the Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk and Sumy regions,” Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, said in a statement on social media. “No military facilities,” he added. “The goal is to deprive people of light and heat.” He denounced the “deliberate and cynical missile strikes” against civilian targets as acts of terrorism.

- **The US ambassador to Ukraine, Bridget Brink, has denounced Russia’s strikes on the power and water facilities.** “Russia’s apparent response to Ukraine liberating cities and villages in the east: sending missiles to attempt to destroy critical civilian infrastructure,” Brink tweeted.
- **“We will call it victory,” Zelenskiy, said in a video address on Sunday, referring to a potential Russian retreat.** He added that he is confident that Ukrainian forces will liberate all Russian-occupied territories across the country.
- **A nationalist militant and former FSB officer who helped launch a 2014 war in Ukraine’s eastern Donbas region compared the collapse of one of the conflict’s principal frontlines to a catastrophic defeat in the Russo-Japanese war which triggered Russia’s 1905 Revolution.** Igor Girkin said it was like the 1905 Battle of Mukden, which took place two days after the revolution started.
- **Russia’s president, Vladimir Putin, and French counterpart Emmanuel Macron have [traded blame during a phone call over safety concerns at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station](#).** “The Russian side drew attention to regular Ukrainian attacks on the plant’s facilities, including radioactive waste storage, which is fraught with catastrophic consequences,” said a statement on the Kremlin’s website. In its statement, the French presidency said the occupation by Russian troops of the plant was what was putting it at risk. Earlier, Ukraine’s nuclear power operator said the last operating reactor at the plant had been shut down and the plant “completely stopped”.
- **Moscow’s leadership has remained “silent” on the defeats in Ukraine, with neither Putin or the Russian defence minister, Sergei Shoigu, making any comment as of midday on Sunday.** Moscow’s almost total silence on the defeat – or any explanation for what has taken place in north-eastern Ukraine – has provoked significant anger among some pro-war commentators and Russian nationalists on social media.
- **Ramzan Kadyrov, the Kremlin-appointed leader of Chechnya, has [criticised the Russian army’s leadership](#) after it appeared to be caught off-guard by Ukraine’s fightback against the Russian invasion in the north-east.** In a sign that the Kremlin may face serious fallout over the loss of territory that the Russian occupation administrations had repeatedly stated they planned to keep “forever”, Kadyrov also suggested that Vladimir Putin might not be aware of the real state of affairs.
- **Russian forces have launched 11 missiles towards the eastern regions of [Ukraine](#), the Ukrainian air force announced in a tweet on Sunday night.** The Ukrainian air forces shot down seven cruise missiles in the Dnipropetrovsk region and two more missiles were destroyed in the Poltava region, the UAF said.
- **Due to shelling of the infrastructure, a number of trains from/to Kharkiv, Sumy, and Poltava are expected to be delayed.** However, not a single train today was canceled; traffic continues on the entire railway network.
- **Two cruise missiles hit critical infrastructure in Kharkiv and firefighters were on scene, according to Kyrylo Tymoshenko, deputy head of Ukraine’s presidential administration.** Tymoshenko said engineers are working to restore power and electricity should soon be back in vital facilities such as hospitals.

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HEADLINE	09/12 Covid stymies 500,000 from labor force
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-illnesses-are-keeping-at-least-500-000-workers-out-of-u-s-labor-force-study-says-11662955321?mod=hp_lead_pos9

Illness caused by Covid-19 shrank the U.S. labor force by around 500,000 people, a hit that is likely to continue if the virus continues to sicken workers at current rates, according to a new [study released Monday](#).

Millions of people [left the labor force](#)—the number of people working or looking for work—during the pandemic [for various reasons](#), including retirement, [lack of child care](#) and fear of Covid. The total size of the labor force reached 164.7 million people in August, exceeding the February 2020 prepandemic level for the first time. The labor force would have 500,000 more members if not for the people sickened by Covid, according to the study's authors, economists Gopi Shah Goda of Stanford University and Evan J. Soltas, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"If we stay where we are with Covid infection rates going forward, we expect that 500,000-person loss to persist until either exposure goes down or severity goes down," said Mr. Soltas. That assumes that some of those previously sickened eventually return to work.

The authors "provide the most credible evidence to date about labor-market impacts for a large set of workers," said Aaron Sojourner, an economist at the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, who wasn't involved in the study.

The study, which hasn't yet been peer-reviewed, was based on a representative population of more than 300,000 workers followed over 14 months in the Census Bureau's monthly household survey. The analysis covered the period from January 2010 to June 2022. The authors used health-related, weeklong absences as a proxy for probable Covid illnesses. From March 2020 to June 2022, approximately 10 workers per thousand missed a week of work due to health reasons, on average, up from six per thousand on average over the decade before the pandemic.

The economists found that people who experienced weeklong absences due to their own health problems were about 7 percentage points less likely to be in the labor force one year later than similar workers who didn't miss work for health reasons.

That translated to a 0.2 percentage-point reduction in the labor-force participation rate, or the share of adults holding or seeking jobs. The rate was 62.4% in August, down 1 percentage point from February 2020.

This estimate is conservative, however, in that it excludes anyone who wasn't working at the survey's outset but who would have become employed if not for illness, as well as those whose absences fell outside of the week during which the Census conducted its monthly survey. Accounting for these, the economists estimate the labor-force decrease would be around 750,000 people, equal to a reduction in participation of about 0.3 percentage point. The study also didn't analyze outcomes for those missing work to care for family members sickened by Covid, nor those who missed less than a week of work due to health.

Many economists see the nation's [workforce's slow recovery](#) combined with the high demand for workers as among the U.S. economy's key challenges, restraining many employers' ability to provide goods and services and contributing to price pressures. Fixing this imbalance, they say, will be essential [to lowering high inflation](#).

In the longer term, economic growth depends on an expanding workforce and rising productivity. A slow-growing labor force means fewer people than otherwise to build cars and wait tables, which could restrain the economy's growth potential.

Ms. Goda said that the analysis reflected the broad health consequences of Covid-19 illness, including [so-called long Covid](#), a condition in which people who have had a probable or confirmed case of Covid experience lingering symptoms weeks, months or as much as a year after infection. Symptoms can include brain fog, shortness of breath and extreme fatigue. Between 10% and 30% of people infected develop long Covid, according to studies and estimates from governments, hospitals, universities and doctors.

	<p>Stuart Smith, age 62, believes he was infected with Covid in the very early days of the pandemic after traveling from his home in Oregon to a conference in Nashville, Tenn. He struggled with respiratory and other symptoms, and said he often had to sit down and rest for five to 10 minutes while walking up the flight of stairs to his bedroom. “I was totally winded. I had absolutely no energy,” he said.</p> <p>The symptoms persisted. Still, he continued to work at his job as a lawyer and consultant for a year and a half, thanks partly to some changes his firm made, such as finding someone to take notes during his meetings and write up summaries. But last October, he hit a wall. “I walked into the office, sat down in my chair and said, ‘I just can’t do this anymore. I don’t have the physical or mental ability.’ ”</p> <p>Mr. Smith left his job, and since then he has done some pro bono legal work and consults for his former employer a few hours a month.</p> <p>“I figured I’d work till I was 67 or 70 because I more or less enjoyed it,” he said. “Now I don’t know if I’m retired or what. I’m in this very strange no man’s land of not really having a name to put on it. I’m not a full-time employee, I do a little work, but I don’t know if I’ll still be working next week or next month.”</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Inflation showed signs of easing in Aug.
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/inflation-showed-signs-of-easing-in-several-industries-in-august-11662888602?mod=hp_lead_pos3
GIST	<p>U.S. consumer-price inflation showed signs of moderating in August for the second straight month, though the decrease was uneven across sectors and it remains unclear whether the slowdown will continue.</p> <p>Gasoline prices fell sharply in August, airfares dropped and used cars and hotels ebbed, while rent increases also gave hints of slowing, according to private firms that track such data.</p> <p>Still, food prices continued to soar this past month and prices for a range of goods and services remained much higher than a year earlier, the figures show.</p> <p>The path of inflation could influence looming decisions by the Federal Reserve about how high to lift interest rates. Inflation could also shape midterm elections as voters assess their pocketbooks.</p> <p>Looking ahead to a government inflation report to be released on Tuesday, many Wall Street analysts estimate the Labor Department’s overall consumer-price index was unchanged or dropped in August from July. If so, it would mark the second straight month of slower inflation since annual inflation surged to a four-decade high in June.</p> <p>“We are experiencing a slowdown driven by the decline in fuel prices, but there is still significant upward pressure in such important categories as food, household items and healthcare products,” said Alberto Cavallo, a Harvard Business School professor who in 2008 created a “billion price” index that tracked dollar amounts of online consumer transactions. “We are not out of the woods yet.”</p> <p>Called PriceStats, the price index—which is managed by State Street Global Markets and generally tracks the CPI—fell in August. The year-over-year increase in the CPI reached 9.1% in June, the highest annual inflation rate since 1981, and ticked down to 8.5% in July.</p> <p>In some industries, firms report progress working through pandemic-related supply-chain disruptions that have pushed prices higher. Meantime, consumers—particularly in low-income households—are pushing back against high prices by changing their spending habits. Moreover, many retailers have amped up discounting programs to clear inventory of clothing and other items that they overstocked during the pandemic.</p>

“I hesitate to call it a bloodbath, but it’s going to be ugly in terms of the amount of discounting and markdowns,” Richard Hayne, chief executive of [Urban Outfitters](#) Inc., said on an earnings call with analysts a month ago.

A leading theme in August was the decline in the [price of gasoline](#). A gallon of unleaded dropped to \$3.84 at the end of August from \$4.22 at the end of July, a 9% decline, according to the AAA.

A range of factors were at play. Recession fears drove oil prices lower. Moreover, households responded to higher prices by changing their habits, [including driving less](#), combining errands and reducing dining out, the AAA reported.

[Airfares dropped, too](#), according to Hopper, an online travel website. The most affordable coach fares on domestic flights fell to an average of \$277 during August from \$312 in July, an 11% decline, according to Hopper.

Fares typically drop in August as summer travel wanes, said Hayley Berg, a Hopper analyst, though the [decline last month](#) represented more than the typical figure for this time of year. Pricing and household travel patterns had been disrupted by Covid-19, but seem to be returning to a state of normalcy, she said.

“This fall looks more like a traditional fall season,” Ms. Berg said.

Hotel rates dropped 4.6% in August from July, according to STR, a global hospitality data and analytics company. Month-to-month declines in August are common in the hotel industry, but they outpaced declines of 2% to 3% for August in prepandemic years.

Used-car prices dropped 1.2% for the month, after soaring during the pandemic, according to Edmunds, an auto-industry researcher. Nonetheless, Ivan Drury, the director of the Edmunds analytics group, said the [auto industry remains plagued](#) by microchip-supply shortages that continue to push up the prices of new cars.

Igor Popov, chief economist at Apartment List, which tracks 5.5 million listings around the country, said that the cost of rental housing stabilized in August after surging in earlier months.

Factors include a slowdown in the pace of household formation, or the number of people starting new homes. Many people cohabitated during the pandemic—for instance, [children moved in with parents](#)—then ventured out as the pandemic eased. Mr. Popov said that the slowing surge in household formation is diminishing the demand for rental housing.

“We are past peak rent growth,” he said, although he added it could take time before the stabilization he finds in his measures shows up in national statistics. Moreover, people taking on new leases for the month of August will still experience sticker shock given earlier rent increases, Mr. Popov said.

Fed officials [meet Sept. 20-21](#) and have suggested they are leaning toward raising their benchmark short-term interest rate by 0.75 percentage point to combat inflation by restraining economic demand. A soft inflation reading would make it easier to slow the pace of rate increases in the months ahead.

Analysts in several industries cited other ways that households have changed their behavior in the face of high inflation and high interest rates.

In the restaurant industry, for example, low-income households are trading down [to less expensive establishments](#) and purchasing less on individual visits, said David Portalatin, food-industry adviser at NPD research, a food-industry research firm.

In supermarkets, shoppers are buying cheaper items and fewer packaged goods, said Krishnakumar Davey at IRI, a sister company to NPD that tracks grocery stores.

	<p>“People are buying more ingredients for scratch cooking,” Mr. Davey said.</p> <p>Consumer spending slowed to a 1.5% annualized growth rate in the second quarter, adjusted for inflation, from 1.8% in the first quarter and 7.9% in 2021. Before the pandemic, spending tended to grow at rates of 2% to 3%.</p> <p>Food-price increases show few signs of slowing, said Mr. Davey. Grocery costs rose 1.6% in August from the month before and were up 13.4% from a year earlier, with big increases in such staples as fruits and vegetables, the firm estimates.</p> <p>“It is still not moderating,” he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Pierce Co. home listings up, sales down
SOURCE	https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/business/real-estate-news/article265552251.html
GIST	<p>Pierce County’s cooler housing market brought down the county’s median sale price from July, as both pending and closed sales showed year-over-year declines for a third straight month, according to new data.</p> <p>Northwest Multiple Listing Service’s latest report showed Pierce County’s median closed sale price for August was \$555,000, down from \$575,000 in July but still up nearly 8 percent from the same time last year.</p> <p>Listings were up more than 100 percent compared with last year, but pending sales were down more than 21 percent from 2021 and closed sales down more than 25 percent from a year ago.</p> <p>Pierce County wasn’t alone. Pending and closed sales year over year were down pretty much across the region.</p> <p>“Last month’s housing numbers certainly are eye-opening,” stated Windermere chief economist Matthew Gardner in the NWMLS release. “However, I believe they are simply indicating the market is trending back to the more normalized conditions that we were seeing before the pandemic.”</p> <p>In a separate report, Redfin on Thursday noted that 30-year mortgage rates are now up to 5.89 percent, “their highest level since November 2008.” Nationally, it reported, “The average sale-to-list price ratio, which measures how close homes are selling to their asking prices, fell to 99.7 percent from 101.2 percent a year earlier.”</p> <p>According to NWMLS, sellers in Pierce, Thurston and Douglas counties were able to get “slightly” more than the asking price from buyers, while the area sale-to-list price ratio was at 99.3 percent.</p> <p>Gardner noted, “Even though inventory in the King, Pierce and Snohomish counties region almost doubled from a year ago, the number of homes for sale is still 14 percent lower than in August of 2019.”</p> <p>J. Lennox Scott, chairman and CEO of John L. Scott Real Estate, noted in the NWMLS release that he expects only two more months to have more homes coming on the market.</p> <p>“Once winter hits, new resale listings will become scarcer until activity ticks up to a higher level in March 2023,” he stated.</p> <p>A separate report from the real estate firm showed there is a “severe” shortage in Pierce County for homes \$500,000 and below, with those up to \$350,000 still selling the fastest with more than 70 percent pending in the first 30 days of July listings.</p> <p>In contrast just 32 percent of homes between \$1 million and 1.5 million went pending in that same time frame, according to the report.</p>

Here's how Pierce County's median closed home sale price compared with other counties in the area, with the percentage increase from same month last year:

- King County: \$899,999, up 5.88 percent.
- Snohomish County: \$749,999, up 7.93 percent.
- Kitsap County: \$550,000, up 9.18 percent.
- Thurston County: \$493,514, up 6.13 percent.
- Mason County: \$435,000, up 9.16 percent.

As for the condo market, Pierce County's median closed sale price was \$395,000, up 16.18 percent from a year ago.

Listings were up more than 70 percent, but pending and closed sales were both slightly down from 2021.

Here's how Pierce County compares with others and how those prices compare with last year:

- King County: \$485,000, up 5.90 percent.
- Snohomish County: \$474,999, down 4.98 percent.
- Kitsap County: \$317,500, down 9.29 percent.
- Thurston County: \$346,500, up 10.88 percent
- Mason County: \$627,500, up 29.12 percent (Note: Mason County recorded just two condo sales in 2022 and one in 2021).

Gardner noted rising inventory was helping to bring down prices in the area month over month.

"I predict prices will drop further as we move into the fall, but reports that we are entering a "bear market" are highly exaggerated," he said in the release.

"The market is simply reverting to its long-term average as it moves away from the artificial conditions caused by the pandemic."

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HEADLINE	09/11 Snohomish Co. Bolt Creek fire evacuations
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/index-residents-told-to-leave-as-bolt-creek-fire-continues-to-spread/
GIST	<p>STARTUP, Snohomish County — Fire crews worked to protect homes west of Stevens Pass on Sunday, as a major wildfire raged uncontained and an evacuation order remained in place for hundreds of homes.</p> <p>The Bolt Creek fire ignited early Saturday morning, spreading rapidly to 7,600 acres by Sunday, prompting evacuations around the small town of Index in the western Cascade Mountain foothills.</p> <p>The posture for fire crews was largely defensive, as officials said the late-summer blaze threatened hundreds of homes and other structures, but had only damaged one outbuilding as of Sunday. No injuries or deaths were reported.</p> <p>Peter Mongillo, a spokesperson for Snohomish Regional Fire and Rescue, said some 500 firefighters battled the fire over the course of Sunday. He said crews have used helicopters to drop water but haven't brought in planes that carry fire-retardant chemicals because windy conditions make such flights more dangerous.</p> <p>An 18-mile stretch of Highway 2 remained closed between east of Gold Bar and Skykomish, with no estimate for reopening. The fire burning in steep and rugged terrain was 0% contained as of Sunday evening.</p>

Many residents of Index and nearby communities left their homes to stay with friends or family or stop by evacuation centers staffed by the Red Cross and other volunteers.

Virginia and Jay Held arrived Sunday morning at an evacuation center in the town of Startup, carrying more passengers than one might expect from wildfire evacuees.

Eleven chickens — including several chicks — rustled restlessly in the back of their station wagon as it rolled into the parking lot on a flat tire.

“We call it a Ford Coop,” Jay Held said as a friend helped replace the tire. “This is our mobile chicken evac unit.”

On Sunday morning, the couple had returned to their home along Mount Index River Road — a small community across the river from Index — only to find the power shut off soon after they arrived.

While they didn’t receive an evacuation order, their neighbors across the river did. That, along with the dystopian orange sun shrouded by an unceasing tarp of ashy smoke, was reason enough to get out.

“We just have to leave everything out there and hope the fire doesn’t make it that far,” Virginia Held said. The couple brought with them tools, a generator and enough supplies to last them several days. “That’s what we’re doing,” she said. “Playing the waiting game.”

The mandatory Level 3 evacuation order is in place for an area stretching from Index to Skykomish, covering about 500 structures, according to Mongillo of Snohomish Fire and Rescue.

The Snohomish County Sheriff’s Office said Sunday that only about half of those in the evacuation zone had left the area. “We ask that they reconsider. The fire remains active. We need everybody’s help protecting lives today,” the department said in a tweet.

A Level 2 evacuation was in place for the area to the immediate west, between Index and Zeke’s Drive-In, meaning people should be prepared to leave immediately. A Level 1 evacuation was in place for Gold Bar, meaning residents should be ready to evacuate if conditions worsen.

Jim Cahill, a spokesperson for the Department of Natural Resources, called the Bolt Creek fire an “unusually large fire for recent history in this area.”

He said hot shot crews were moving in to scout out the terrain for areas where fire lines can be created, taking advantage of existing roads and trails as starting points.

“They’re still moving forward with the focus on protecting structures, infrastructure, homes and public safety,” he said.

Destructive wildfires and choking blankets of smoke have become an expected, if unwelcome, feature of summers across the Western U.S., exacerbated by droughts scientists predict will grow only [more severe](#) as greenhouse gas emissions from cars, manufacturing and power plants stoke climate change.

The Bolt Creek fire is one of 19 large active wildfires burning in the Pacific Northwest, according to the Northwest Interagency Coordination Center. The [Goat Rocks fire](#) in Lewis County had burned more than 2,800 acres, spurred evacuations and closed both directions of Highway 12, according to the U.S. Forest Service and the state Department of Transportation.

Nationally, 92 large wildland fires have burned nearly 728,000 acres this year, mostly in northwestern states, according to the [National Interagency Fire Center](#).

Smoke from the fires drifted into the Seattle area, causing what appeared to be one of the worst days for local air quality in two years, according to preliminary data from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Air quality is also at unhealthy levels in the Tri-Cities, Spokane and Pullman areas because of wildfires in Idaho, Montana and Oregon.

Cooler weather is expected later this week, according to the National Weather Service, with light rain possible in the Seattle area.

Those temporarily displaced by the Bolt Creek fire were hoping the weather won't push the blaze any farther west.

Randy Ladowski, 34, and his girlfriend spent the night outside an evacuation center at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds in Monroe, in a homemade structure on his truck that included a bed, kitchen, composting toilet and solar panels.

Ladowski works as a rope access technician in Seattle but lives in Index. He was busy transferring his climbing and skiing gear from his car to the trailer Sunday morning.

Before evacuating, Ladowski said he took one final walk around town with his friends and neighbors. "Everyone was kind of lighthearted," he said. "Then we started to realize this could be it."

Ladowski had just managed to sneak back into Index on Sunday morning to get his motorcycle and park it in Gold Bar.

"I took one lap around town on the bike and then was like, 'I gotta go. I'm going to start crying,' " he said.

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HEADLINE	09/11 Utilities proactively turnoff power amid fires
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/times-watchdog/wa-utilities-proactively-turn-off-power-as-wildfires-come-west/
GIST	<p>The Bolt Creek Fire had been growing for less than three hours Saturday morning when homes along Highway 2 from Baring to Grotto lost power. A tree fell onto a power line operated by Puget Sound Energy, darkening 343 homes, and acting as a harbinger for the weekend ahead.</p> <p>A small fire reported around 5 a.m. Saturday grew from 20 acres to 7,600 acres that day. By 2 p.m. PSE elected to cut power to another 416 homes surrounding Skykomish.</p> <p>It was a notable decision for the utility. For years, PSE has said preemptive power shut-offs were unlikely to be necessary for most of its service area in Western Washington and has declined plan for them. The company says just 1% — or 100 miles — of its territory is considered to be at high risk for wildfires.</p> <p>Because Washington state has few regulations for utilities' wildfire safety — unlike California and Oregon — PSE was not required to plan for how it would handle a dangerous weather or wildfire event that required it to preemptively shut off power.</p> <p>Deliberate power shut-offs are intended to prevent utility-caused disasters under extreme weather and heat and are increasingly considered the industry standard. Failing to shut off power amid drought and high winds has led to some of the West Coast's most devastating burns, including California's Camp Fire in 2018, which killed 86 people in the town of Paradise.</p> <p>In January, a Seattle Times investigation found Washington has few mechanisms to enforce whether its three investor-owned utilities — Avista, PacifiCorp and PSE — are operating safely enough to prevent wildfire hazards. State regulators don't have the power to impose fines if there are hazards, and they aren't required to inspect power lines for fire risk. Nor are utility companies required to report to the state a fire caused by power lines unless it results in serious injury or death.</p>

While Oregon and California have passed laws and strong guidelines on plans to cut power, Washington has lagged behind. Only last summer did the state Utilities and Transportation Commission ask utilities to submit wildfire mitigation plans, but it did not create a formal standard to measure the efficacy of the plans.

This slow adaptation may now leave utilities such as PSE and Avista in Eastern Washington, which also doesn't have a preemptive power shut-off plan, playing catchup to nature. Climate change has already created a more intense and severe fire landscape, and scientists anticipate more serious wildfires closer to homes, even in Western Washington, like this past weekend's Bolt Creek fire. Both conditions were once considered extremely unlikely.

Some utilities in the state already have plans to shut off power in extreme weather conditions. The Bonneville Power Administration and the Snohomish Public Utility District both have power shut-off plans for their lines under dangerous conditions.

On Sunday morning, power was shut off for 335 homes and businesses by the Snohomish Public Utility District. Many are the same homes residents are being urged to evacuate, the utility said. In addition, Bonneville cut power to three of its high-voltage transmission lines.

Virginia Held, 56, and her husband left their cabin at 10 p.m. Saturday night, after seeing black clouds cracking through the mountain ridges, distinct from the gray smoke that had settled like fog over their neighborhood, blowing debris in hot gusts of wind. They packed up camping gear, important papers, and their 11 chickens. Sunday morning, the couple drove back to check on their house, and, finding it intact, turned on the coffee pot. Minutes later, their power was shut off. The Snohomish PUD had flipped the switch.

"Fires just aren't common in this area. It is frightening not knowing if you will have a home to come back to" she said. "Highway 2, it is almost like a rainforest, but it just dries out so much in the summer now, and people over here maybe aren't quite so careful."

People who stay in their homes without power, however, can face life-threatening complexities, like lack of access to refrigeration, crucial medical devices, and fans or air conditioners amid soaring heat. It's an argument PSE has made for slow-walking their own power shut-off plan.

Both Bonneville and Snohomish said their outages Sunday were requested by county emergency officials to protect firefighters from the risk of electrocution as first responders attempt to save structures and quell the fire. As of Sunday afternoon, each said, they don't plan to undertake any additional power shut-offs unilaterally but will continue to de-energize lines as needed.

In an email, Andrew Padula, a spokesperson for PSE, said the company will continue to monitor weather conditions to determine whether additional outages are necessary. Asked about how the utility was addressing medically sensitive customers, he said, "Our teams make extra efforts to contact these customers in a planned outage. We also have sent emails and made calls to customers in the impacted areas."

Still, how Puget Sound identifies which areas are at risk was among the key hurdles it self-identified in planning for power shut-off and better wildfire prevention.

The company "does not currently have the data and information, nor the necessary tools to effectively implement [public safety power shut-offs] at this time," Jon Piliaris, director of regulatory affairs for PSE, said in a July 2021 letter to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission.

"The lack of robust tools and data available to PSE compared to the dynamic risk model tools used in California is not something that can be addressed prior to the 2021 Fire Season and not likely to be addressed for several years or longer," he said, adding that a viable funding source to fix this had yet to be identified.

	<p>In contrast, California has spent millions of dollars in this type of investment, he said.</p> <p>If PSE had a preemptive power shut-off plan, it would require them to tell regulators how it identifies conditions that would trigger a shut-off, as well as how it would notify and prepare customers, first responders, and other key agencies.</p> <p>In April, Puget Sound shifted gears, and said it would begin to develop such a plan by conducting a series of community events to hear how best it could inform residents and local officials of power shut-offs. Over the summer meetings were held in Ronald and Roslyn in Kittitas County and Greenwater, Pierce County, with another planned for Cle Elum in October.</p> <p>The fire that began in Skykomish on Saturday didn't wait for PSE to make a plan.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/10 Ukrainians in WA want to work but can't
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/refugees-in-all-but-name-ukrainians-in-wa-want-to-work-but-cant/
GIST	<p>EVERETT — After a monthslong journey that took them from Ukraine to Poland to Mexico to Everett, Ivan Lopatskyi's family of eight squeezed into a crowded house. There were 16 people in all.</p> <p>They shared beds and laid mattresses on the floor — happy nonetheless to be away from bombings and in the home of Lopatskyi's brother, and grateful to the U.S. for offering refuge.</p> <p>But four months later, the 42-year-old Lopatskyi, who owned a plant nursery in the western Ukrainian city of Rivne, finds himself in a bind. He has yet to receive permission to work and will likely have to wait months more.</p> <p>So he's not sure how his family can continue to afford their Everett town house, which they moved into after a nonprofit provided several months' rent.</p> <p>Their dilemma is similar to that of many new Ukrainian arrivals — as of July, estimates show roughly 7,500 have come to Washington, a top American destination because of the large Ukrainian population already here — and stems from their status in the U.S.</p> <p>Despite escaping destroyed cities and war atrocities, eliciting enormous American sympathy, recent Ukrainian arrivals are not considered official "refugees." Instead, they are "humanitarian parolees," granted visas for one or two years and relegated to a patchwork of support without automatic entitlement, like refugees receive, to work.</p> <p>At least that's the way immigration authorities see it, directing Ukrainians to apply for permits through a logjammed system with a wait time of six to eight months.</p> <p>Lawyers for a group of Ukrainians in Washington and across the country filed a federal lawsuit in August in Illinois, arguing that Ukrainians should be able to work immediately by virtue of a May congressional act making them eligible for the same benefits as refugees.</p> <p>"It doesn't make sense to me," said plaintiff Oleksiy Ostapenko, who operated a wellness center in Ukraine with his wife, a doctor, before coming to live with his brother in Spokane. Why put people on welfare for months when they could be working instead? he asked.</p> <p>U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services declined to comment on the lawsuit, but pointed to a new online work permit application process that may be more efficient.</p> <p>Some Ukrainians could likely step into a job easily. Oleksandr Kucherenko is a mechanical engineer who supervised hundreds of people at a steel plant in the now Russian-occupied city of Mariupol. Long</p>

fascinated with planes, he said he had a promising interview with Boeing for a well-paid assembly mechanic job.

“I want this job. I need this job,” said Kucherenko, whose newly built house in Mariupol was bombed to rubble several months before his family of four came to the U.S. and moved into his sister’s two-bedroom Everett apartment.

But he later learned he needed to be a citizen, permanent resident, refugee or someone granted asylum for the job.

Employers, struggling to find workers during a labor shortage, are also frustrated.

“I couldn’t tell you how many voice messages and emails I have from different companies who are looking forward to hire Ukrainians,” said Oleg Pynda, executive director of the Ukrainian Community Center of Washington.

Pynda helped organize a job fair Aug. 25 and 26 in Renton for new arrivals from Ukraine and Afghanistan, with dozens of employers, including T-Mobile, Amazon, Starbucks and the Hyatt Regency, hoping to at least facilitate connections for when work permits come through.

Of some 2,000 work permit applications his organization helped file for Ukrainians since the war began, Pynda said in late August he didn’t know of any that had been approved.

Afghans who fled the Taliban takeover also received temporary humanitarian visas rather than refugee status. But most admitted to the U.S. so far have been evacuated to military bases, where their work permit applications were processed during monthslong stays. The permits were ready soon after Afghans left the bases for Washington and other parts of the country.

While Ukrainians wait for their permits, federal and local governments have scrambled to provide aid, giving them access to welfare, food stamps, medical benefits and job-training programs.

Washington in June also launched a short-term rental assistance program for new Ukrainian and Afghan arrivals. (Many Afghans, though working, have found minimum-wage jobs and are struggling to support their families.) The state is now rolling out a follow-up program.

Yet with more Ukrainians arriving in Washington by the day, Sarah Peterson, the state’s refugee coordinator, acknowledged: “The need will far exceed the resources available.”

“Dad, take us out of here”

Lopatskyi awoke to the sound of military airplanes, grabbed his phone and checked the time: 4:29 a.m. It was Feb. 24, the first day of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and an airstrike targeted a city about an hour away.

More bombings followed, one so close he thought his home’s windows would blow out, he said, relaying his family’s journey to the U.S. through an interpreter. People rushed out to get food. It took three hours to buy a loaf of bread. School was canceled.

“If something happens, don’t run around and look for us,” Lopatskyi and his wife Mariia told the kids. “Mom and Dad will find you.”

The children, ages 11 months to 18 years, were not reassured. “Dad, take us out of here. We’re scared,” some pleaded.

So when a friend called to ask whether Lopatskyi and his family wanted to join a trip to Poland, he accepted. With only a couple of hours to pack, his family took a few treasured possessions: Ukrainian-language Bibles, mementos from trips to Jerusalem and Korea, a clock with a religious inscription.

The family stayed at an American Red Cross shelter, then with a Polish family volunteering to host Ukrainians.

“About a week later, I said, ‘I can’t just sit here idle and do nothing,’” Lopatskyi recalled. Leaving his family in Poland, he went back to Ukraine to deliver emergency supplies.

Lopatskyi eventually returned, and at the urging of his brother, who lives in Everett, he and his wife decided to move to the U.S. The best route, the Lopatskyi family determined, was through Mexico.

Tens of thousands of Ukrainians were making the same choice. The U.S., awash in news coverage of the war, let them in — eliciting criticism of preferential treatment for Europeans while scores of asylum-seekers from Central America and elsewhere were turned away.

But that didn’t make these Ukrainians eligible for the American refugee process, reserved for people outside the country.

Once accepted, individuals are loaned money to travel to the U.S. and referred to a resettlement agency that greets refugees at the airport, finds them housing, connects them with services and orients them to American culture.

Peterson, the state refugee coordinator, said Ukrainians passing through the Southern border — thought to be the largest group escaping the Russian invasion to arrive in Washington so far — have even less structured support than compatriots who came to the U.S. through other avenues, primarily via a federal program that allows Americans to sponsor Ukrainians with a pledge to provide initial support once they arrive.

The federal program, Uniting for Ukraine, still doesn’t confer refugee status or work authorization, and sponsors who pledge support often have limited knowledge of how to access resources.

Ukrainians at the border didn’t have that formal support — though many, like the Lopatskyi family, had relatives offering an initial place to stay, and an amazingly coordinated volunteer effort stepped in to help.

Slavic church members greeted the Lopatskyi family at the Tijuana airport, bringing them to a camp providing hundreds of Ukrainians with hot meals, tea and cots to rest.

The volunteers set up a waiting list. When people’s numbers came up, they got on buses and were taken to the border.

“Around 8 p.m., we started losing hope,” Lopatskyi said. It was April 24, and at midnight the U.S. was closing the border to Ukrainians, directing them instead to the Uniting for Ukraine program.

One more bus, thought to be the last, rolled into the camp a couple of hours later. It had room for 80. Seventy-seven people filed on, and then Lopatskyi’s number came up.

“They asked me how many people. I said eight.” There are only three places left, he was told.

“Those are my lawful seats and I am not ready to give them up,” Lopatskyi insisted.

All eight were allowed to pack into the bus, making it to the border at 11 p.m.

Visas in hand, the family crossed the border, to the cheers of volunteers on the U.S. side, and met Lopatskyi’s brother, who had driven from Everett to pick the family up.

Once they made it to Washington, the Lopatskyi family joined Mukilteo’s Sulamita Slavic Pentecostal Church, which sent volunteers and two buses to the border and has continued to help Ukrainians new to

	<p>the U.S. As families have arrived, many of the roughly 1,500 church members have taken turns hosting them in their homes.</p> <p>One day, senior pastor Vladimir Monich took Lopatskyi aside and asked him if the family needed help with housing. He even offered to co-sign a lease.</p> <p>“I was shocked,” said Lopatskyi, who took him up on the offer.</p> <p>The Lopatskyi family inquired about some 20 houses before finding a landlord willing to rent to people with no work history or authorization in the U.S.</p> <p>While Mariia said she’s likely to stay home with the kids, Lopatskyi is eager to get to work as soon as possible. And although he’s just learning English, he has some prospects.</p> <p>Monich and his son both own contracting companies and are eager to hire Ukrainian newcomers — and Lopatskyi has extensive construction experience.</p> <p>“I could build everything in this house,” he said, “wood floors, tile, no problem.”</p> <p>No problem, that is, except without a work permit, he can’t.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Seattle’s air quality among worst in world
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/tech/science/environment/seattle-air-quality-worst-major-cities-in-world/281-1c57e55e-5abc-42cf-a745-fb18522b0075
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Seattle’s air quality put it among the worst major cities in the world Saturday night, according to IQ Air, which tracks levels across the globe.</p> <p>The air quality in the city reached an "unhealthy" rating of 190 at around 5:45 p.m. Saturday. "Unhealthy" air quality levels range between 150-200 before reaching "very unhealthy" from 201-300, according to IQ Air. An air quality level over 300 is considered hazardous.</p> <p>Around Puget Sound, the air was thick and visibility was way down. An Air Quality Alert is in effect for much of our area because of these fires and could cause health concerns for people with respiratory issues.</p> <p>But that didn’t stop many from still getting out and enjoying their Saturday.</p> <p>Seattle’s Kerry Park is usually known as picture-perfect.</p> <p>"I've seen the photos online of the viewpoint and thought it looks like a great view of the city came up here and was like whoa expecting for it to be much clearer than this, so yeah the smoke is quite visible," said Marshall Max, whose visited Seattle’s Kerry Park on Saturday from the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Despite the smoke, many visitors including Max are still enjoying taking in the sights.</p> <p>"We will get a few, we will get a few, still nice to have it for the memory bank, but you know wasn't exactly like Google in the end," Max said.</p> <p>KING 5 didn't have to Google how long this smoke will last in Seattle. KING 5 just asked our very own morning Meteorologist Rich Marriott.</p> <p>"As we get in tomorrow we'll start to see some cleaner air begin to come to the coast not really into the interior but it will quit bringing smoke in here," Marriott said. "By tomorrow during the day we'll probably be up to moderate air quality which is a vast improvement over today and by Monday we should be getting back into good air quality."</p>

	<p>With a breath of fresh air just on the horizon, Marriott acknowledged Saturday marks the worst smoke western Washington has encountered this year, with some areas in the Puget Sound ranging from unhealthy for sensitive groups and unhealthy for everyone. But he was hopeful, that we'll have a picturesque end to the wildfire season.</p> <p>"Well hopefully this will be it for the summer for us and we got off pretty easily this summer with just one episode and really a short one," Marriott said. "But we still have a chunk of September left and it's still wildfire season, so we'll see."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Seattle record: most 90-deg days in year
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/seattle/seattle-90-degree-day-record-most-in-a-year/281-f472a02d-003c-46a0-8b05-093f4dc09398
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Seattle broke the record for the most 90-degree days in a year on Saturday, when the temperature reached 92 degrees.</p> <p>Saturday's temperature was also a daily record for Sept. 10.</p> <p>There have been 13 days that reached 90 degrees or above in Seattle in 2022, according to the National Weather Service.</p> <p>The previous record for the most 90-degree days in a year in Seattle was originally set in 2015, with 12, according to KING 5 Meteorologist Chris Nunley.</p> <p>The Seattle area had a record six straight days of 90-plus degrees at the end of July. That was the longest stretch of days at that temperature in the 77 years records have been kept.</p> <p>There was a Red Flag Warning in place on Friday and Saturday due to high temperatures and breezy conditions. The Goat Rocks Fire spread to several thousand acres by Saturday in the Gifford Pinchot Forest. The Bolt Creek Fire ignited and spread to 7,600 acres near Skykomish and Grotto.</p> <p>Temperatures will return to typical seasonal norms as an upper-level trough moves into the region on Monday, with more chances for showers, according to the NWS. High temperatures will be in the mid-60s on the coast and the mid-70s across the interior.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Snohomish residents disregard evac order
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/eva-09-11-2022
GIST	<p>SKYKOMISH, Wash. — Hundreds of people have been urged to leave their homes from Skykomish to Index as the Bolt Creek Fire has now grown to 7,600 acres, yet officials say more than half are staying put despite the evacuation orders.</p> <p>One camper on Sunday described how he escaped the fire shortly after it broke early Saturday morning north of Skykomish.</p> <p>"I could feel the heat from the fire. It sort of felt like a hot air fan blowing on my face and that was when I knew I just had to get out of there," camper Hussain Aleaziz explained.</p> <p>Aleaziz and his brother were among the campers who bolted from the Beckler River campground Saturday morning.</p> <p>"Where there was a faint glow an hour ago there was now just full-blown flames," he added. "I threw everything else in the car, left some things behind, and just took off."</p>

He said he and the others escaped the flames barreling toward Highway 2, where fire crews say the now 7,600-acre fire is threatening hundreds of structures between Skykomish and the community of Index.

People in Index got the notification to evacuate late Saturday night.

“Unfortunately, we’re getting reports that about 50 percent of the people in that area are not heeding that warning,” Snohomish County Regional Fire and Rescue Spokesperson Peter Mongillo stated. “We’re urging people to follow those evacuation orders for their safety and also for the crew’s safety because if they get in trouble, it’s difficult to get to them.”

The Red Cross is ready to help people with shelter at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds, though only a few people took advantage of the cots Saturday night, and less than a dozen slept in their cars outside.

Meanwhile, others like Ashley Bruder in Gold Bar remain on standby, keeping her sprinklers on as a precaution.

“Pretty nervous,” Bruder said Sunday. “You know, nothing’s been contained, and don’t know if it will be contained if it’s going to come down this way if we’re going to lose anything, and how much longer we should stay here. We just remain packed and ready to go.”

While it’s too soon to know when those who have evacuated can return home, fire crews are hoping they can get better control of the fire thanks to natural breaks in the area like Highway 2. They did get some rain Sunday morning but say it’s not enough, that they need more if it and the winds shift.

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HEADLINE	09/11 Firefighters battle 11 major Calif. wildfires
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/firefighters-battle-11-major-california-wildfires-mosquito-fairview-rcna47226
GIST	<p>Firefighters in California are making progress against 11 major wildfires, including the Mosquito and Fairview fires, according to a statewide fire update published Sunday.</p> <p>More than 8,300 firefighters are working to contain the fires across the state, but they are bracing for more potential significant wildfires because of coming critical fire weather. So far this year, 325,083 acres have burned in California, according to the fire summary.</p> <p>Potential critical fire weather includes a high risk for lightning in Northern California "in eastern areas on Sunday combined with very flammable fuels," it said. Breezy west and southwest winds at 25 to 35 mph will also develop through the San Francisco Bay Area coastal gaps, and south to southeast winds of 15 to 25 mph will extend up to the Sacramento Valley.</p> <p>Isolated thunderstorms may also develop around the Lake Tahoe Basin on Sunday afternoon, according to the fire summary.</p> <p>The Mosquito Fire, which has consumed 41,443 acres, is 10% contained, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire, said on Twitter. The Fairview Fire has consumed 28,307 acres and is 45% contained. Both fires continue to threaten communities, structures, critical infrastructure and wildlife.</p> <p>The 12,365-acre Mountain and the 3,935-acre Mill fires in Siskiyou County are 60% and 90% contained respectively.</p> <p>On Saturday, red flag warnings were in place for many parts of the Northwest because of extreme fire weather conditions, as well, including Seattle and Tacoma in Washington and Bend and Portland in Oregon.</p>

	<p>Oregon's Cedar Creek Fire has grown to 85,926 acres with 0% containment because of the weekend's weather conditions, the Oregon fire marshal's office said in a news release.</p> <p>A level 3 evacuation is in place for "2,230 homes and 443 commercial structures" that are under threat by the fire, the release said. The state fire marshal "has committed seven task forces and an incident management team to protect homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure in the area."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Officials: 2nd possible monkeypox death
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/second-possible-us-death-monkeypox-reported-california-rcna47243
GIST	<p>A second possible death from monkeypox in the U.S. is under investigation in Los Angeles County, officials said.</p> <p>Chief Medical Director Rita Singhal of the county's Public Health Department said details were unavailable at this early stage of the investigation.</p> <p>"This is one of two deaths in the United States that are under investigation to determine whether monkeypox was a contributing cause," she said at a public briefing Thursday.</p> <p>In late August, the Texas Department of State Health Services reported that a person diagnosed with monkeypox in the Houston area had died. The patient was described in a statement as "severely immunocompromised."</p> <p>The role of monkeypox in the patient's death was under investigation, Texas officials said at the time.</p> <p>In California, 4,140 cases were reported last week; 1,694 were in Los Angeles County, health officials said.</p> <p>The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Friday in a weekly report on monkeypox that a case analysis found that 61% of people in the U.S. who have developed the viral disease also had HIV or another sexually transmitted infection or disease.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 National debt nears \$31trillion and counting
SOURCE	https://www.foxbusiness.com/features/us-national-debt-nears-31-trillion
GIST	<p>America's government debt is on the verge of eclipsing \$31 trillion for the first time ever, even as COVID-related federal spending slows.</p> <p>Treasury Department data released late last week showed the total national debt was \$30.9 trillion and on pace to hit \$31 trillion as early as this month.</p> <p>The new milestone is just around the corner even as President Biden boasts about dramatic drops in the annual budget deficit – the difference between what the government spends each year and what it collects in tax revenue.</p> <p>In 2020, when COVID led to a sharp economic downturn and a dramatic spike in new federal spending, the government spent a record-high \$3.1 trillion more than the revenue it collected. In 2021, the budget deficit fell just a bit to \$2.8 trillion, and it's expected to be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1 trillion by the end of the current fiscal year that ends Sept. 30.</p> <p>"You know, Republicans talk about being fiscally responsible," Biden said last week at a Democratic National Committee reception. "Last year, I reduced the deficit \$350 billion. You know how much this</p>

year, not counting the Medicaid changes? One trillion seven hundred billion dollars. So I don't want to hear it from Republicans about fiscal responsibility."

But budget experts warn that Biden's boast is a hollow one, and that he is simply presiding over a winding-down of emergency spending that is resulting in relatively smaller deficits. David Ditch, a federal budget policy analyst at the Heritage Foundation, said it's a mistake to confuse this wind-down with fiscal responsibility.

Ditch told Fox News Digital that in the decade before COVID-19, the average annual budget deficit was about \$1 trillion, and entitlement programs like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid ensure the deficit will be stuck somewhere around that level.

"The problem is these structural deficits will keep us at about \$1 trillion per year, and we may hit \$2 trillion per year in the next decade," Ditch said. "Running that deficit every year without an emergency, it's mind-boggling."

Ditch said entitlement reforms are urgently needed to get spending under control to reduce these structural problems and curb the [inflationary effects of federal spending](#). But he said there's no interest in that idea under the Biden administration.

"Right now, there's no appetite for spending reductions," he said. "We hear absolutely none of that from the left."

Instead, he noted that pressure on federal spending continues to rise in the form of recent legislation to fund the semiconductor industry, Biden's push to [forgive student loans](#) and the pricey environment and health bill known as the Inflation Reduction Act. While Democrats point to tax increases in that bill as a way to reduce the federal deficit, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that deficits would rise through 2026 once the bill takes effect.

All of this adds up to a national debt that at best is growing more slowly than it did under the COVID emergency, when it only took a month to rack up \$1 trillion in new debt. A return to normal means adding \$1 trillion every eight or nine months.

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HEADLINE	09/12 Border sheriffs slam DC mayor
SOURCE	https://www.foxnews.com/politics/border-sheriffs-slam-dc-mayor-officials-declaring-emergency-migrant-buses-welcome-our-world
GIST	<p>Sheriffs dealing with the crisis at the southern border are taking aim at Washington D.C. for declaring a public emergency over fewer than the migrants that have been bused into the sanctuary city by Texas and Arizona -- and bristling at claims that the buses have turned D.C. into a "border town."</p> <p>"They have seen nothing. They are not a border town. They don't know what a border town is," Goliad County, Texas, Sheriff Roy Boyd told Fox News Digital.</p> <p>Washington D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser on Thursday declared a public emergency over the migrant buses which have been coming to D.C. from Texas and Arizona since April. She said the move allows the city to create an Office of Migrant Services to provide migrants with accommodation, health care, transportation and other services.</p> <p>"We're putting in place a framework that would allow us to have a coordinated response with our partners," Bowser said Thursday. "This will include a program to meet all buses, and given that most people will move on, our primary focus is to make sure we have a humane, efficient, welcome process that will allow people to move on to their final destination."</p>

She is one of a number of liberal mayors and officials of self-proclaimed "sanctuary cities" who have sounded the alarm over the influx of migrants -- which represent just a fraction of those encountered at the border. A D.C. councilmember [sparked pushback](#) when she declared that "in many ways, the governors of Texas and Arizona have turned us into a border town,"

Texas has sent less than 10,000 migrants to Washington D.C. since April, while Border Patrol has so far encountered more than two million migrants this fiscal year, with monthly encounters regularly hitting the 200,000 mark. Sheriffs and border officials who have been dealing with the crisis since shortly after President Biden took office have responded with astonishment at the noises coming from the cities.

"I think it's all a bunch of political grandstanding, trying to get themselves some attention and squeeze a little bit of money out of the federal government or somewhere else that they can use for whatever they think it's needed for," Boyd said. "If they want to see what it looks like. They can come down here for us. It's being shoved on us by the federal government and their policies and their lack of enforcement."

Boyd is one of a number of sheriffs and border officials who believe D.C. and New York are just getting a taste of what they have experienced daily since the crisis began.

"'Welcome to our world' is what they say," Jonathan Thompson, executive director and CEO of the National Sheriffs' Association told Fox News Digital. "Welcome to the everyday problems we are facing, and you have been ignoring and that you continue to want to blame someone else for."

"The sheriffs on the border right now are living this every day," Retired Texas Sheriff Clint McDonald, the executive director of the Southwestern Border Sheriff's Coalition, told Fox News Digital. "And they've been criticized for asking for help with what they're going through. And now that major cities are starting to feel this pressure, it seems to be a whole different scenario for them than it is for the people who live it every day."

He noted prior instances where sheriffs faced over 10,000 migrants and "not one of the federal people came down to help with that."

"So we don't have sympathy for these people," he said.

Both sheriffs groups described those based on that border as overwhelmed and exhausted from months of encounters that exceed 150,000 -- and the knock on effects of the crisis.

"They're overwhelmed," Thompson said. "They're overwhelmed trying to bring dead bodies and the remains of illegal aliens that are found in the desert. They're overwhelmed in their communities with human services shortfalls. They're overwhelmed with crime response. And they're overwhelmed with just the sheer magnitude of things that need to happen to help care for people."

"They're upset about what is going on," McDonald said. "And this is what is happening for our people every day. So the whole situation has got the border region upset and we're trying to survive day to day -- then they receive a few of these people in their communities and they're screaming for help when our border sheriffs cannot get any help."

Boyd said he supported the move by Abbott, saying it had made the border crisis -- which he said has been ignored by liberal media outlets -- back into focus.

"It was a brilliant move on the part of Governor Abbott in order to ensure that the word began to spread through channels that previously had ignored the problem," he said.

Thompson urged D.C. to stop blaming border states and turn their focus on the Biden administration.

	<p>"We finally now have cities and communities that are experiencing real pain, real suffering, and they want to blame someone else. Well, they should pick up the phone and dial [The White House]. Talk to the president... That's who owns the policy, that's whose policy it is and that's what's directing the surge."</p> <p>McDonald told Fox News Digital that it wasn't just Republican sheriffs who are upset with the crisis, but Democrats as well.</p> <p>"The people on the border realize that this is not a red issue, and it's not a blue issue. It's a red, white and blue issue," he said. "And it's time America takes care of Americans. And right now, we're just not doing that."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Seattle teacher strike persists
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/seattle-teacher-strike-persists-classes-monday-89721566
GIST	<p>SEATTLE -- Students in Seattle on Monday will miss a fourth day of school as teachers strike over pay and classroom support.</p> <p>The school district Sunday afternoon announced the cancellation of Monday classes and said negotiations with the union were ongoing.</p> <p>"We are optimistic an agreement will be reached soon so that students can begin school," Seattle Public Schools said.</p> <p>The strike began Wednesday, what was supposed to be the first day of school for the approximately 49,000 students in the district.</p> <p>Striking teachers said their main concern was educational and emotional help for students, especially those with special needs or learning difficulties. The Seattle Education Association said 95% of its voting members approved the strike.</p> <p>In Seattle, the school district had offered pay raises of an additional 1% above the 5.5% cost-of-living increase set by state lawmakers — far less than the union says it wants — plus one-time bonuses for certain teachers, including \$2,000 for third-year Seattle teachers earning an English language or dual-language endorsement.</p> <p>The union says it is opposing the district's efforts to eliminate staffing ratios for special education students, saying that will mean more work for general education teachers and special education teachers alike.</p> <p>Districts around the country have faced labor challenges as the pandemic put extraordinary stress on teachers and students.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Covid deaths drop, cases lowest since Jun.
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/09/11/world-covid-19-weekly-deaths-drop-25-cases-21/1321662908531/
GIST	<p>Sept. 11 (UPI) -- COVID-19 cases and deaths worldwide are at the lowest levels since June with a 21% weekly drop in infections to around 475,000 daily and a 24% decline in fatalities to about 1,550 each day with few countries reporting increases in the past week, including Russia.</p> <p>Daily deaths dropped to 865 Saturday, the first time under 1,000 since June 19's 963, according to Wordomerers.info. Cases were 358,960, the least since 335,261 on Oct. 11.</p> <p>In the past week, 3,325,074 cases were reported and 10,861 deaths worldwide.</p>

The total number of cases was 613,639,062 and deaths were 6,516,161 so far Sunday.

Some nations do not report data on weekends. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention doesn't report data on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.

Even the most recent hotspots -- Japan and South Korea -- are subsiding.

On Sunday, Japan added 81,491 infections, with a 21% weekly decline, for a total of 20,174,553 in ninth worldwide, passing Russia in the past week with the record 255,534 three weeks ago. In the past week, Japan led the world with 743,974.

Also, Japan gained 104 deaths for a total of 42,675 in 26th globally, eight days after a record 291.

South Korea posted the second-most weekly cases 479,625, a 20% decrease, for a total of 23,569,192, but only 28,214 Sunday, the fewest in one month in sixth place. The nation added 79 deaths for a cumulative 27,476 in 37th, including a 19% weekly drop at 415, seventh-most worldwide.

Though BA.5 Omicron subvariant spreads worldwide, infections dropped to a daily average of 475,010, the lowest figure since 436,486 June 11 and passing 1 million the last time on April 13, according to tracking by Worldometers.info. On Jan. 21, the daily record was set at 3,842,921.

Fatalities in the past week were down to 12,675. That seven-day daily average is 1,552 with the recent low of 1,303 on June 21, the fewest since 1,073 on March 21, 2020, 10 days after the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic.

In the past week, Asia reported 52% of the world's cases though it dropped 20% for a cumulative 186,394,794, according to Worldometers.info. Every continent decreased led by South America 50% for 63,844,398, North America at 38% for 115,205,515, Africa 31% for 12,626,900, Oceania 28% for 12,246,476, Europe 9% for a high 223,333,0784.

Continents reporting deaths increases were Oceania 8% for 20,041 and Africa 1% for 257,493. Decreases were North America 35% for 1,529,546, South America 34% for 1,327,174, Europe 23% for a high 1,909,001, Asia 14% for 1,472,927.

The U.S. leads with 1,075,659 fatalities and 97,082,331 infections. The U.S. holds the world record for daily cases at 909,397 on Jan. 13. Brazil is second in deaths at 684,906, including 40 Saturday and fourth in cases at 34,572,480, including 8,560 Saturday. India is second in cases at 44,495,357, including 5,068 Sunday and 2,869 Aug. 25, the least since 2,745 May 31, and third in deaths at 528,150, including 3 Sunday with single deaths reported in April and zero the last time on March 24, 2020.

India has the daily deaths record at 4,529 on May 18, 2021, with no adjustments from regions.

Big case increases in the past week with more than 25,000 in descending order were Taiwan 13% with 241,382 and Poland 23% with 25,007. Russia rose 3% at 332,400 in fourth behind No. 3 United States at 358,567 with a 38% drop.

Also in the top 10 for most cases, No. 6 Germany was 11% lower with 204,422, No. 7 France 121,867 with a 6% rise, No. 8 Italy 110,644 with a 19% decline, No. 9 Hong Kong don 71,225 at 6% and No. 10 Brazil 57% lower at 57,049.

Among nations reporting more than 100 deaths with big increases in the past week: No. 9 Australia 373 at 17% and Guatemala 10% at 111.

The United States had the second-most fatalities in the past week with 1,745 but a 39% decrease, followed by No. 3 Russia 638 with a 2% rise, No. 4 Germany 537 with 18% fewer, No. 5 Brazil 492 with 44%

	<p>decrease, No. 6 Britain 448 with 27% decline, No. 8 Italy 373 with 25% drop, No. 10 Philippines 326 with 7% lower.</p> <p>Russia is fourth overall in deaths at 385,348, including 86 Sunday and was last above 100 on May 1 with 110.</p> <p>In the top 10 for deaths, Mexico is fifth with 329,758 including 23 Saturday, Peru sixth with 216,086 and 41 Saturday, Britain seventh with 188,026 with no data on weekends, Italy eighth with 176,175 including 34 Sunday, Indonesia ninth with 157,770 including 13 Sunday and France 10th with 154,468 with no change Saturday.</p> <p>In the top 10 for cases, France is third with 34,701,710 including 19,517 Saturday, Germany is fifth with 32,452,250, Britain sixth with 23,554,519, Italy eighth with 22,035,717 including 15,563 Sunday, Russia 10th with 20,013,781 including 53,486 Sunday.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/09 Paid taxes more than food, clothing, health
SOURCE	https://www.cnsnews.com/article/washington/terence-p-jeffrey/americans-spent-more-taxes-2021-food-clothing-and-health-care
GIST	<p>(CNSNews.com) - According to newly released data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Americans in 2021 once again spent more on average on taxes than they did on food, clothing and health care combined.</p> <p>During 2021, according to Table R-1 in the BLS' Consumer Expenditure Survey, American "consumer units" spent an average of \$15,495.28 on food, clothing and health care combined, while paying an average of \$16,729.73 in total taxes to federal, state and local governments.</p> <p>"A consumer unit," the BLS says in the glossary for its Consumer Expenditure Survey, "comprises either (1) all members of a particular household who are related by blood, marriage, adoption or other legal arrangements; (2) persons living alone or sharing a household with others or living as a roomer in a private home or lodging house or in a permanent living quarters in a hotel or motel, but who is financially independent; or (3) two or more person living together who use their income to make joint expenditure decisions."</p> <p>On average in 2021, American consumer units spent \$8,289.28 on food; \$1,754.39 on clothing (apparel and apparel-related services); and \$5,451.61 on health care.</p> <p>That equaled a combined \$15,495.28.</p> <p>At that same time, American consumer units were paying an average \$16,729.73 in net total taxes.</p> <p>These included \$8,561.46 in federal income taxes; \$5,565.45 in Social Security taxes; \$2,564.14 in state and local income taxes; \$2,475.18 in property taxes; \$105.21 in other taxes—minus an average of \$2,541.71 in stimulus payments received back from the government.</p> <p>In 2020, according to BLS Table R-1 for that year, American consumer units paid an average of \$17,148.12 in net total taxes and paid \$13,927.74 for food, clothing and health care combined.</p> <p>The \$17,148.12 in net total taxes that consumer units paid on average in 2020 included \$8,811.78 in federal income taxes; \$5,392.35 in Social Security taxes; \$2,429.71 in state and local income taxes; \$2,353.42 in property taxes, and \$71.87 in other taxes—minus an average \$1,911.01 in stimulus payments received back from the government.</p> <p>The \$13,927.74 that consumer units paid for food, clothing and health care, included \$7,316.47 for food; \$1,434.26 for clothing; and \$5,177.01 for health care.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Covid-19 still killing hundreds daily
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-is-still-killing-hundreds-of-americans-daily-11662888600?mod=hp_list_pos1
GIST	<p>Mark Pfundheller promptly got his first two Covid-19 shots and a booster, his family said, knowing the disease was a threat related to treatment for an inflammatory disorder that compromised his immune system.</p> <p>The 66-year-old former aviation consultant for Wisconsin's Transportation Department caught the virus in April at a family wedding near his home in southern Wisconsin, where many guests were infected. Mr. Pfundheller died in a Madison, Wis., hospital on July 2 after an illness including time on a ventilator.</p> <p>His was one of nearly 200,000 Covid-19 deaths in the U.S. this year, according to death-certificate data. While the virus has become less risky for many thanks in part to immunity from vaccines and prior infections, it is still killing hundreds each day. Most are older people, and many have underlying health conditions and compromised immune systems, doctors said.</p> <p>"I don't think people realize that this is still a big deal," Mr. Pfundheller's daughter Jamie Pfundheller said.</p> <p>The U.S. has recently averaged about 320 new Covid-19 deaths each day, and the average was above 400 before the Labor Day holiday weekend, data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show.</p> <p>The rate is far below pandemic peaks, including levels above 2,500 a day during the Omicron wave early this year. But the country hasn't matched lows closer to 200 a day reached during a lull last year.</p> <p>Roughly 85% of people who died from Covid-19 through mid-August this summer were 65 or older, a Wall Street Journal analysis of death-certificate data show. The rate is similar to 2020 peaks, before vaccines were available. Deaths trended younger for much of last year.</p> <p>Covid-19 is on pace to be the third-leading cause of death for the third straight year, said Dr. Robert Anderson, chief of the mortality statistics branch at the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics. Since 2020, it has trailed only heart disease and cancer, significantly reducing life expectancy.</p> <p>The problem is this summer's infections due to Omicron subvariants such as BA.5. Though case trends have recently eased, the consistently heavy volume has kept deaths elevated.</p> <p>"If it's attacking so many people on such a regular basis, unfortunately, some people will have severe illness and deaths," said Dr. Paul Biddinger, chief preparedness and continuity officer for Mass General Brigham, a Boston-area hospital system.</p> <p>Luke Spicer, 69, from Pardeeville, Wis., died from Covid-19 complications and other ailments five days after Mr. Pfundheller. The former public-school band director was nearing the end of his life because of Parkinson's disease and Lewy body dementia, and Covid-19 hastened his death, his son Peter Spicer said. The music lover and former athlete was vaccinated and caught the virus at a long-term-care facility, his son said.</p> <p>"There's people like my dad who will still die from it because they're in tough shape," he said.</p> <p>The health system AdventHealth counted 24 deaths related to Covid-19 at its Orlando, Fla.-area hospitals in August. Age was the biggest factor, although younger patients with compromised immune systems were also at risk, doctors with the health system said. All but one Covid-19 patient who died had serious health problems such as diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart failure and obesity.</p>

“It was not uncommon in the previous waves to have someone that was older than 65 with minimal comorbidities,” said Dr. Eduardo Oliveira, AdventHealth’s executive medical director of critical-care services. “Right now, when we see them, they appear to have more.”

Doctors said these older, at-risk patients are similar in profile to people vulnerable [to dying from influenza](#). There remain key differences. Covid-19 threatens serious, [long-term symptoms for some people](#). Flu deaths range from roughly 15,000 to 70,000 a year, said Dr. Anderson at the CDC, while the most recent seven-day average for Covid-19 deaths over a year would add up to 116,000.

The U.S. shouldn’t accept this as the burden of living with Covid-19, said Dr. Katelyn Jetelina, an epidemiologist who writes a newsletter tracking the pandemic and other issues. “It’s a substantial number of deaths, and it’s I think a tragedy,” she said.

Federal health authorities are urging people to get vaccine shots that target the [original virus and Omicron subvariants](#). About 29% of fully vaccinated people age 65 and up haven’t received their first booster dose, CDC data show.

CDC data show vaccines greatly reduce rates of hospitalization and death. While roughly three-quarters of the adult population in Memorial Hermann Health System’s southeast Texas territory are vaccinated, about half of recently hospitalized Covid-19 patients haven’t received the shots, said Dr. James McCarthy, the system’s chief physician executive.

Mr. Pfundheller caught Covid-19 shortly after federal authorities cleared a second booster, which he planned to get, his daughter, Ms. Pfundheller, said. The wedding, which he attended maskless, occurred as cases in Wisconsin were in a post-winter trough.

Though he raised his children alone, he never missed their events, family members said. Eldest daughter Lindsey Lentz, in a eulogy, highlighted his sense of adventure, including flying his children on stomach-churning airplane rides that included flips upside down.

His health in later years was compromised by Churg-Strauss syndrome, which causes blood-vessel inflammation and often triggers asthma. He required treatment with immunosuppressive medication and had long been vulnerable to infections, his family said. But he was an active golfer and was hitting the dance floor at the April wedding.

“He was living a full life up until Covid,” said his wife since 2004, Kelli Pfundheller. “It was Covid that changed everything.”

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HEADLINE	09/11 Heatwave hits supermarkets produce aisles
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-heat-wave-hits-supermarkets-produce-sections-11662888601?mod=hp_lead_pos6
GIST	<p>High temperatures in the Western U.S. are hitting the produce industry, damaging crops, shrinking shipments and leaving fewer leafy greens and fruits on supermarket shelves.</p> <p>A California grower said some of his lettuce leaves are turning brown and melting in the fields because of crop diseases intensified by the high temperatures. In Pennsylvania, a retailer said its stores went a week without having strawberries to sell. A New York distributor has substituted honeydew melons for watermelons, which have become scarce.</p> <p>Supermarkets say they are giving less shelf space to products with weather-induced discolorations, bruises or burns. Stores are cutting prices on poor-quality items to avoid getting stuck with them, and increasingly receiving products from Canada, Florida, New Jersey and Ohio instead of California, long the go-to source for U.S. grocers.</p>

“We can’t ship lettuce with defects,” said Mark Mason, manager of California-based Nature’s Reward, which grows romaine, iceberg and leaf lettuce. “There are fields that are near losses.”

Mr. Mason said disease has likely cut Nature’s Reward’s lettuce yields this season by at least 15% compared to the year-ago period. Incidence of disease in the company’s fields has been normal throughout the growing season until the last week to 10 days, when a surge in damaged plants has led to a dramatic decline in yields, Mr. Mason said. The prices he receives for lettuce have increased slightly during that time, he said.

California vegetable growers said the current heat wave could be fueling diseases that kill or damage lettuce, leaving less to sell to restaurants or grocery stores. High temperatures can promote diseases such as pythium wilt and impatiens necrotic spot virus, or INSV, according to produce growers, researchers and trade groups. Pythium wilt is a soil-borne disease, while INSV is transmitted to lettuce by small insects known as western flower thrips.

Christopher Valadez, president of the Grower-Shipper Association of Central California, which represents produce farmers, shippers and processors, said this season appears to closely resemble 2020 in terms of high temperatures and disease incidence in lettuce. Disease cut lettuce yields along California’s central coast by about 30% that year, he said.

“The crop is under stress when it’s hot,” said Mr. Valadez. “That makes plants more vulnerable to infection.”

The recent heat wave has also curbed Nature’s Reward’s strawberry shipments, Mr. Mason said, reducing the amount of time that workers can spend in fields and leaving fruit more vulnerable to damage during harvest, which can reduce its shelf life in stores.

Produce, which can be harvested and sold within days, has always been vulnerable to weather. This year’s hot temperatures are creating more quality and supply problems, industry executives said, though the heat’s long-term impact on produce remains unclear.

Early heat in Washington reduced the cherry supply earlier this summer, while watermelon season ended earlier on the East Coast. Some grapes are growing mold, according to some distributors, while others anticipate avocados might have sizing issues and be bigger than usual.

All of this is driving up costs for grocers, and slowing sales volume. Prices of produce increased about 11% for the four weeks ended Aug. 7 from a year ago, according to data firm IRI, while sales volume declined about 5%.

In the year through Sept. 3, shipments of iceberg, green leaf and red leaf lettuce were the lowest since at least 2006, according to Rabobank. Average annual per-pound prices for the week ended Sept. 3 are higher than levels a year ago for all three lettuce varieties, with prices for iceberg and romaine at or above their highest in at least 16 years, the data showed.

Heat is affecting seasonal summertime staples for Topco Associates LLC, a cooperative of more than 40 food sellers, including Wegmans Food Markets Inc. Rolling power blackouts are disrupting operations for some of Topco’s California produce vendors, according to Mike Ferguson, Topco’s senior vice president of fresh programs.

“There are obviously a lot of concerns among the supplier network for the Western-grown fruits and vegetables,” Mr. Ferguson said.

California’s lettuce supply is among the biggest concerns for fall and winter, said Doug Diffenderfer, vice president of produce operations at 10-store chain Karns Foods in Pennsylvania.

	<p>Already, lettuce is smaller, more expensive, and customers are buying less, he said. If lettuce quality continues to decline, Mr. Diffenderfer said, shoppers will also purchase less dressing, tomatoes and other items they typically buy with lettuce.</p> <p>Karns is buying produce as needed rather than placing orders in advance, in addition to shrinking shelf displays. Other retailers are selling lower-quality products cheaper, even if that means slimmer profit margins, said Stefanie Katzman, executive vice president at produce distributor S. Katzman Produce Inc.</p> <p>“We’ve had more gaps than normal,” she said of supply, adding that she has purchased more inventory from New Jersey, New York and Ohio growers this year.</p> <p>Tops Markets LLC has been procuring more iceberg lettuce and celery from Canada and Michigan over the past few years because of continued challenges on the West Coast, said Jeff Cady, vice president of produce and floral at the New York-based grocer. Sourcing products from closer markets shortens delivery times and keeps produce fresher, he said, and quality is comparable.</p> <p>This year, the company might start getting grapes from Peru earlier than usual if California crops are in bad shape from the weather. He said: “It has a ripple effect, unfortunately, for the consumer and for us.”</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Oil prices slump as recession fears grow
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/oil-prices-slump-as-recession-fears-grow-11662839059?mod=hp_lead_pos4
GIST	<p>Another turbulent week in oil markets carried crude prices to their lowest point since January, with thin trading and a blurry outlook for supply and demand driving a fitful 30% decline from this year’s highs.</p> <p>A 5.9% gain since Wednesday notwithstanding, the main U.S. oil benchmark has shed about \$35 a barrel since peaking above \$122 three months ago. West Texas Intermediate closed Friday at \$86.79. Brent crude futures, the primary international price gauge, ended at \$92.84.</p> <p>Much like what happened on the way up early this year, the decline in prices has been intensified by heightened volatility and diminished liquidity in the futures markets, which are meant to ease the movement of barrels around the world.</p> <p>Traders and analysts said that an overwhelming number of variables—from calculating how much consumption will be reduced by China’s Covid-19 lockdowns to handicapping how many of Russia’s shunned barrels will make it to market—has made it unusually difficult to anticipate the direction of prices.</p> <p>Other examples of uncertainty looming over the market include how long the Biden administration will dip into the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve to boost domestic supply, whether sky-high natural-gas prices in Europe will prompt utilities to burn oil instead, and to what degree the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its market allies are willing to throttle back output to support prices.</p> <p>A renewed nuclear deal between the U.S. and Iran could bring Iranian petroleum back to the market. Lately, fears of recession and reduced consumption have overshadowed concern about inadequate petroleum supplies and pushed prices lower.</p> <p>BofA Securities analysts laid out cases in a recent note to clients for oil prices to both rise and fall by as much as \$20 over the next few months. “There is simply too much uncertainty around fundamentals going into the winter,” they wrote.</p> <p>The unpredictability has boosted volatility, which has sent traders to the sidelines. Open interest, a measure of trading activity, has lately been about half what it was five years ago in the most active U.S. oil futures contract and about 30% what it was last year.</p>

The decline in trades has reduced liquidity—the ability to carry out transactions at expected prices without causing big moves in prices or disorderly trading—in markets that were already hampered by thin trading and prone to wild swings, traders said.

Bernard Drury, chief executive of Drury Capital Inc., a commodities-trading firm that uses momentum-investing strategies that follow prices up and down, said that between oil that is about twice as expensive as it was before the pandemic and the added risk of elevated volatility, speculators including him can't take nearly as many positions in the futures market.

"We'll trade maybe a third of the number of contracts we traded a couple of years ago and still get the same kind of risk exposure," Mr. Drury said. "If everyone on the speculative side of things is acting like us, they might be participating more or less fully, but they're trading fewer contracts."

That has made it harder for businesses involved in producing, transporting and consuming actual barrels of oil to find counterparties in trades that help them manage their own risk.

Traders cautious of tipping their hands or making big ripples in thin markets have been breaking trades into smaller transactions, making it harder to determine prices, said Shankar Narayanan, head of research at Quantitative Brokers LLC, which uses algorithms to trade on behalf of hedge funds, banks and asset managers.

So-called quote size in U.S. crude futures trading has shriveled by about 50% from a year ago and is down more than 70% over the past three years, which has resulted in wider gaps between offers to buy and sell. Bigger spreads have helped boost volatility and reduced liquidity by more than half since 2019, Mr. Narayanan said.

"Oil prices have been scraping the skies since February but on a very poor foundation of liquidity," he said. "The price is not sustainable."

Over the past two weeks, price-trend-following hedge funds and trading algorithms that dominate the speculative side of the oil market have piled into short bets, or wagers that prices will fall, according to Peak Trading Research.

The Swiss firm created a mathematical model to gauge the direction that momentum traders are betting, and it hit a rare perfect bearish score this past week for the first time since the emergence of the Omicron variant of Covid-19 [rattled energy markets](#) in late 2021. Peak's gauge in late August registered a perfect bullish score, meaning that momentum traders were basically all positioned for rising prices two weeks ago.

"Big hedge funds have been layering on shorts, and they're now playing for lower prices," said Dave Whitcomb, who runs Peak. "This is a definitive sign that the bull market is over. You can stick a fork in it."

At an energy-industry conference in New York this past week, the chief executive officer of rig owner [Patterson-UTI Energy](#) Inc. told investors that whipsawing crude prices haven't shaken demand for drilling equipment among the Houston firm's customers.

"None of them were really planning on \$110 oil; I mean, that was just bonus for them," CEO Andy Hendricks said. "The volatility has not changed the discussions at all in the U.S. for our services."

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HEADLINE	09/10 Guns bought by credit cards trackable
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/sep/10/guns-credit-card-trackable

GIST

Credit card purchases of firearms in the US can now be [tracked](#) and purchases deemed suspicious can even be shared with law enforcement, according to a new measure approved by an organization that sets parameters for business transactions.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) [voted in favor](#) of creating a merchant code for firearms stores, according to Reuters.

Merchant codes are four-digit codes that categorize retailers across all industries; until now, gun purchases had been [classified](#) under “miscellaneous retail stores” or “sporting goods stores.”

While the measure has been [lauded](#) by politicians such as Massachusetts senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey among others, it isn’t clear how this process will work.

Numerous top level credit card companies such as PayPal, Stripe and Square don’t allow gun purchases. For the credit companies that do allow the purchases, the total cost can be extra high [due to interests](#).

As a result, [many gun buyers often use cash](#) for their purchases; potential buyers are often seen [asking](#) in [online forums](#) whether it’s better to buy guns with cash or credits, with many voting for cash.

Meanwhile, fintech companies such as Credova, built for the purpose of allowing installment plans for gun purchases, [shrug off their role](#) when asked about how people like the Uvalde, Texas, shooter purchased guns through their platform using a debit card.

John Feinblatt, president of Everytown for Gun Safety, welcomed ISO’s decision, which was announced on Friday, and said it’s now crucial for this to be implemented thoroughly.

“Today’s announcement is a critical first step towards giving banks and credit card companies the tools they need to recognize dangerous firearm purchasing trends – like a domestic extremist building up an arsenal – and report them to law enforcement,” he said in a [statement](#) shared with the Guardian.

Amalgamated Bank, which brands itself as a “socially responsible bank” had requested the codes to the ISO.

On Friday, they [celebrated](#) their victory, thanking their partners, including New York governor Kathy Hochul and New York Attorney General Tish James.

Priscilla Sims Brown, President and CEO of the bank, said in a statement that the code will open the path for banks to report suspicious or illegal gun sale activity in a way that [will not interfere](#) with legal gun sales.

“This action answers the call of millions of Americans who want safety from gun violence and we are proud to have led the broad coalition of advocates, shareholders, and elected officials that achieved this historic outcome,” she added.

The tracking and blocking of illegal gun sales has already made headway with FBI background checks, according to Everytown.

In 2020, the FBI background checks led to [blocking more than 300,000](#) illegal gun purchases, nearly double the number of 2019.

The same year, gun purchases [skyrocketed](#) as people were stuck indoors during the first wave of the pandemic; records show there were 20m legal purchases in 2020, up from 12.4m the year before.

In a statement, the Alliance for Gun Responsibility said: “We are glad to see the financial industry take action to recognize that it has a role to play in helping keep our communities safe. Passing stronger gun laws is essential, but it is just one piece of the puzzle when it comes to addressing the gun violence epidemic.”

HEADLINE	09/11 Exposed: thinly spread Russia invaders
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/11/ukraines-gains-expose-thinly-spread-russian-invaders-more-could-follow
GIST	<p>In five days, Ukraine's northern counteroffensive has changed everything. What began as a push in a part of the front largely ignored by military analysts became an advance of 43.5 miles (70km), capturing "more territory than Russian forces have captured in all their operations since April", according to the Institute of the Study of War.</p> <p>Before Wednesday, Ukraine had struggled to make much progress with offensive operations. Yet, south-east of Kharkiv, Kyiv has shown it can dynamically exploit military circumstances in its favour – opening up the prospect of further dramatic gains before winter settles in.</p> <p>Russia had diverted thousands of its best combat troops to defending the southern city of Kherson, in response to a Ukrainian offensive that it said it had begun a couple of weeks ago. Exhausted by months of continuous war, the Kremlin left the sector south-east of Kharkiv lightly defended.</p> <p>The more recent offensive appears to be the second stage of a two-pronged – Kherson then Kharkiv – counterattack. Either way, Ukraine had quietly amassed forces in the north over the past week or more – a build-up disastrously missed by Russian military intelligence – to strike against defenders in part from the Rosgvardia national guard, press-ganged separatist forces from Luhansk. It does not appear that Russian reserves were in theatre.</p> <p>Ukraine's forces first encircled Balakliia, 45 miles south-west of Kharkiv, then pressed north to reach the broad Oskil River south of the rail and supply hub of Kupiansk, entering the city thereafter. That cut off Izium, a key military centre, to the south and prompted the Russians to abandon a city seized at the end of March.</p> <p>Ukraine's success has partly been achieved by use of both tanks and infantry, on a front where the enemy was weakened by long-range artillery strikes (most likely from US and other MLRS rocket artillery). It made good use of intelligence to spot the Russian weak point, and exploited the geography – the river – to maximum advantage. But above all it showed use of combined arms in appropriate strength not seen before.</p> <p>Russia had been proceeding on the assumption that it could, with the relentless use of heavy artillery – 15,000 to 20,000 shells a day – grind its way east. Now it suddenly appears that Russia spent months engaged in an attritional conflict that at first only brought it limited gains – Sievierodonetsk – then latterly almost nothing at all as it failed to capture Bakhmut.</p> <p>The latest battle for Izium demonstrates how thinly spread the invaders have become. Russia's overall force quality has gradually degraded, at about 100,000 soldiers, who are rarely rotated out to recuperate, and have to cover the vast Ukraine front. Its use of air power remains limited. Meanwhile, because the Kremlin refuses to label its war in Ukraine as such, Moscow can mobilise limited additional resources.</p> <p>Nevertheless, is not clear how far Ukraine can sustain its momentum. The combination of western-supplied intelligence, weapons and training finally appears to be bearing fruit, but pushing too far forward in one go can bring its own risks. On the other hand, maps released by Russia's ministry of defence on Sunday indicate that it plans to retreat to the Oskil River line the length of Kharkiv province – and it is not clear if the front will stabilise there.</p> <p>Ukraine can now target supply lines into northern Luhansk province. A loss of Izium relieves the pressure on Sloviansk from the north-west, and allows Ukraine to try to reverse the losses it has sustained in the Donbas – the collective name for Donetsk and Luhansk provinces – starting in the direction of</p>

	<p>Lysychansk. At the same time, there may now be an unfolding opportunity to make progress around Kherson in south, where Russia is likely to have to withdraw forces.</p> <p>Critical, now, is what political impact this will have. Barring extraordinary events on the battlefield, Ukraine is unlikely to be able to defeat Russia definitively before winter sets in. However, Kyiv has shown what a difference western support can make and could make next year, heading off potential external criticism as energy price rises bite this winter.</p> <p>Morale in Ukraine remains high, and its political aims are broad: regain all territory, demand reparations from Russia, and ensure that a war crimes tribunal is held.</p> <p>These are not points that will be conceded by the Kremlin for now. But Vladimir Putin and the Russian army leadership – the subject of rare criticism by the Chechen leader, Ramzan Kadyrov, on Sunday – face serious questions. How they respond could determine if their war is still winnable.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Day 200 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/11/ukraine-russia-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-200-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukraine’s counter-offensive in the north-east of the country has inflicted an extraordinary defeat on Moscow, prompting the Russian army to pull back thousands of troops after suffering a series of battlefield defeats. • Ukraine appears to have regained control of the two key cities of Kupiansk and Izium after a major counteroffensive in the Kharkiv region in recent days, after wrongfooting Russian forces with a much-publicised Ukrainian southern offensive to distract Russia from the real one being prepared in the Kharkiv region. • Photos published by the Ukrainian security forces showed troops raising the national flag in Kupiansk, an important logistical hub for Russian forces in eastern Ukraine, where rail lines linking Russia to eastern Ukraine converge and which, in the last months, has supplied Russian forces in north-eastern Ukraine. • The Russian Ministry of Defence confirmed the withdrawal of its troops from Izium, the major base for Moscow’s forces in Kharkiv, claiming they were being “regrouped” so that efforts could be stepped up in Donetsk. Retaking Izium is perhaps Ukraine’s most significant success in pushing back the Russians since the beginning of the invasion. • The Ukrainian flag has also been raised in the city of Balakliya, according to the Kharkiv regional governor. • The UK Ministry of Defence said Russian forces were “likely taken by surprise” by the counteroffensive. The much-publicised Ukrainian southern offensive was a disinformation campaign to distract Russia from the real one being prepared in the Kharkiv region, Ukraine’s special forces said. “[Russia] thought it would be in the south and moved their equipment. Then, instead of the south, the offensive happened where they least expected, and this caused them to panic and flee,” said Taras Berezovets, a former national security adviser turned press officer for the Bohun brigade of Ukraine’s special forces. • In a video address on Saturday the president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, said Ukrainian forces had liberated about 2,000 sq km (700 square miles) of territory since the counter-offensive against Russia started earlier this month, saying, “The Russian army these days is demonstrating its best ability – to show its back.” • Residents in Russian-controlled parts of the Kharkiv region have been advised to evacuate to Russia, according to the state-run news agency Tass. • A woman has been killed and at least 20 civilians injured in Russian shelling in the Kharkiv district, according to the regional governor. • A resident of Izium, who preferred to remain anonymous, confirmed to the Guardian that the Ukrainian troops had entered the city. Before that, “Russian occupying forces were rapidly withdrawing, leaving ammunition and equipment behind.”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UN said it has documented “torture and ill-treatment” of prisoners of war held by Russian forces in Ukraine. It also said it had corroborated at least 5,767 civilian deaths, though added that the actual numbers are “likely considerably higher”. • The Ukrainian military said a further 350 Russian soldiers have been killed, bringing the total number since the start of the invasion to 52,250. • The military also said Russia is also sending 1,300 Chechen fighters to the southern Kherson region. It comes as western intelligence suggests that Russian forces in Kherson are coming under sustained pressure from Ukrainian attacks. • Despite the gains made by Ukraine’s armed forces, the US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, said the war was entering a critical period and he urged Ukraine’s western backers to keep up their support through what could be a difficult winter.
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HEADLINE	09/10 Ukraine ‘southern offensive’ disinformation
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/10/ukraines-publicised-southern-offensive-was-disinformation-campaign
GIST	<p>The much-publicised Ukrainian southern offensive was a disinformation campaign to distract Russia from the real one being prepared in the Kharkiv region, Ukraine’s special forces have said.</p> <p>Ukrainian forces are continuing to make unexpected, rapid advances in the north-east of the country, retaking more than a third of the occupied Kharkiv region in three days. Much of Ukraine’s territorial gains were confirmed by Russia’s defence ministry on Saturday.</p> <p>“[It] was a big special disinformation operation,” said Taras Berezovets, a former national security adviser turned press officer for the Bohun brigade of Ukraine’s special forces.</p> <p>“[Russia] thought it would be in the south and moved their equipment. Then, instead of the south, the offensive happened where they least expected, and this caused them to panic and flee.”</p> <p>On 29 August, Ukraine’s southern command announced that the long-anticipated offensive in the Kherson region had begun. But soldiers on the Kherson frontline said at the time that they saw no evidence of said offensive or that the active battles taking place were a reaction to an attempted Russian offensive several days earlier.</p> <p>For the past two weeks, Ukrainian forces in the south took several villages – no small feat given the reported strength of Russian positions and one which nevertheless resulted in injuries.</p> <p>But the gains were not remarkably different from the steady but limited progress Ukrainian forces had been making in the Kherson region over July and August.</p> <p>And yet, the capture of these tiny Kherson villages, with populations of a few thousands, suddenly became big international news.</p> <p>Natalia Humeniuk, a spokesperson for Ukraine’s southern command, had insisted on a “regime of silence” and temporarily banned journalists from visiting the frontlines in Kherson.</p> <p>But Berezovets said the media stir around the southern offensive was a coordinated disinformation campaign by Ukraine, targeted at Russian forces, that had been building for several months.</p> <p>It was successful in provoking Russia to move equipment and personnel to the southern front, including partly from Kharkiv region, said Berezovets.</p> <p>“Meanwhile [our] guys in Kharkiv were given the best of western weapons, mostly American,” he said.</p>

Part of the special operation involved rooting out informants in Ukrainian-controlled parts of Kharkiv to stop them passing information about Ukraine's preparations to the Russians, said a military source with knowledge of the operation.

"The [informants] were almost completely cleaned up. They mostly comprised normal Ukrainian civilians but there were some Russian agents undercover as Ukrainian civilians," said the source. "The Russians had no idea what was going on."

Russia's defence ministry has confirmed the retreat, describing it as a regroup. It says it has retreated from Iziurm and the town of to "bolster efforts" on the Donetsk front.

"A three-day operation was carried out on the drawdown and organised transfer of the Iziurm-Balakliia group of troops to the territory of the Donetsk People's Republic," said the Russian defence ministry spokesperson, Igor Konashenkov.

"In order to prevent damage to the Russian troops, a powerful fire defeat was inflicted on the enemy."

Russian state media and bloggers have confirmed Russian soldiers have been forced to make a large-scale retreat from Kharkiv.

Ukrainian troops have in the past few days pushed Russian forces out of a number of settlements in the region that Moscow occupied since the first days of its invasion.

In a video address late on Friday, the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, said Ukrainian forces had liberated more than 30 settlements in the Kharkiv region.

A local resident of Iziurm, who preferred to remain anonymous, said that the Ukrainian troops had entered the city. Before that, "Russian occupying forces were rapidly withdrawing, leaving ammunition and equipment behind".

Ukraine's retake of Iziurm could be its most significant success in pushing back the Russians since the beginning of the invasion.

By capturing the nearby town of Kupiansk, Ukrainian forces have managed to cut off the supply lines for the Russian formations in control of the Iziurm area," said Serhiy Kuzan, a military expert at the Ukrainian Security and Cooperation Center.

Kuzan said the Russian formations in charge of the south-east area of Kharkiv, labelled the Iziurm area by military experts, were professional Russian soldiers, not mercenaries or conscripts from Russian-occupied Donbas.

The offensive has been carried out at lightning speed, with a third of occupied Kharkiv being captured by Ukrainian forces in just a matter of days, he said.

The UK's Ministry of Defence has said Ukraine's counter-offensive took Russian forces by surprise, adding that Kyiv's forces had advanced 50km (31 miles) along a narrow frontline and retaken or surrounded several towns.

With Ukrainian operations also continuing in Kherson, the Russian defensive front is under pressure on both its northern and southern flanks," it said.

"We are actually surprised by how poorly the Russians have retreated," said Kuzan. "Retreat is part of the art of war. When we retreated, we made sure they suffered losses as they advanced and we did to so to ensure that they only advanced 1, 2, 3 kilometres.

	<p>“They were so confident that they didn’t prepare their defences,” he added. “This has shown that the only advantage they have is in the number of artillery pieces and heavy equipment. So all we need is the same amount.”</p> <p>After the big territorial gains made this week by Ukraine, Moscow is sending columns of military reinforcements to the Kharkiv region, according to reports in Russian media.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/10 Calif. in moment of relief: cool, wet weather
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/10/us/california-fires-rain-floods-heat.html
GIST	<p>LOS ANGELES — For more than a week, Californians endured a heat wave that smashed records, pushed the state’s energy grid to the brink and parched the landscape, creating conditions ripe for catastrophic wildfires. Several new blazes ignited and quickly burned through bone-dry vegetation, sending thousands fleeing from their homes.</p> <p>So residents felt exalted when Saturday came cooler and wetter than the days before.</p> <p>“Thankfully, this historic heat wave is coming to an end,” said Cory Mueller, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Sacramento, where temperatures reached a record 116 degrees on Tuesday. “It’ll almost feel cold out there today compared to last week.”</p> <p>He added: “That’s obviously kind of a joke, because it’ll still be in the 90s.”</p> <p>Temperatures in Southern California were mostly in the 80s on Saturday, and forecasters predicted scattered showers through the weekend from the remnants of Tropical Storm Kay.</p> <p>Across the region, residents saw gray skies and stepped into warm, damp weather that felt more like the weather in a rainforest than the baking sunshine they had grown accustomed to.</p> <p>The arrival of the storm on Friday — one of the closest approaches of an intact tropical cyclone to California in decades — caused some hiccups across the region, largely because any rain this time of year is unusual. (For instance, 0.61 inches of rain fell on San Diego on Friday, breaking the record for that date of 0.09 inches, set in 1976, according to the National Weather Service.)</p> <p>The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, the nation’s biggest public utility, warned customers about power outages caused by falling branches or palm fronds knocked off trees by the first significant rainfall in months. On Saturday, the agency said crews were working as quickly as they could to restore power to tens of thousands of customers.</p> <p>Coastal flood advisories were in place on Saturday in some low-lying beach and island communities, while a flash flood watch was in effect in the southeast corner of the state, the National Weather Service said.</p> <p>But though there were some toppled boats and muddy parking lots in beach towns where high tides sometimes inundate streets, significant flooding wasn’t reported in Southern California.</p> <p>For firefighters and residents facing the state’s most dangerous active blazes, the weather on Saturday prompted sighs of relief — even if climate change ensures that any respite from dangerous fire conditions in California is temporary.</p> <p>In Riverside County, east of Los Angeles, officials had expressed concerns that the rare brush with a tropical storm would make it much more difficult to fight the Fairview fire, which killed two people and injured one more as they tried to flee the fast-moving blaze not long after it started on Monday. Officials were worried that the storm would bring winds that would fan flames and that heavy rain could trigger flash flooding and mudslides on fire-scarred hillsides.</p>

But by Friday evening, officials said that winds were much less intense than feared. And overnight, steady rain helped firefighters control the blaze, which had burned more than 28,300 acres and had destroyed or damaged about 30 buildings as of Saturday morning.

“There was fairly heavy rain overnight — probably the brunt of what Tropical Storm Kay was going to bring — over the area,” said Rob Roseen, a spokesman for Cal Fire, the state’s firefighting agency.

There were no reports of mudslides in the region.

The Fairview fire was just 5 percent contained by Friday morning. By Friday night, it was 40 percent contained, according to officials, and some evacuation orders had been eased to warnings.

Maryann Tassone spent two nights at an evacuation shelter in Hemet, not far from the blaze. On Saturday, she was arranging transportation home for her bedridden mother after the evacuation order for her parents’ mobile home park had been lifted.

Although Tropical Storm Kay did not end up exacerbating the fire that had sent her family fleeing, Ms. Tassone, 58, said she was not comforted by the weather patterns.

“I am scared that the weather is going to take us down eventually,” Ms. Tassone said. “Whether it is super hot, or whether it is super cold, raining or whatever, but if you notice every incident that’s going on anywhere in the United States is because it’s weather caused. That’s scary.”

Late on Saturday afternoon, state fire officials said that a privately owned helicopter that they had contracted to help with firefighting efforts crashed as it was landing at a nearby airport. The three people onboard, a pilot and two firefighters, sustained moderate injuries and were taken to a hospital. Mr. Roseen said he did not have information about what may have caused the crash.

The rain did not reach the Sierra Nevada foothills northeast of Sacramento, where the explosive Mosquito fire continued to rage uncontrolled, but the authorities said that the cooler temperatures and humidity on Friday and through the weekend were creating a crucial window for getting a handle on the blaze.

“Are we out of the woods yet? No, there’s still a long firefight ahead of us,” Rob Scott, a fire behavior analyst at the U.S. Forest Service, said on Saturday. But he added that the cooler weather and cloudiness were encouraging: “That’s going to help firefighters get a toehold in the environment and start containing the fire,” he said.

On Friday night, the fire continued to grow, and by Saturday it had burned almost 34,000 acres, but officials said the fire’s recent spread had been slower than it had been in previous days.

Earlier in the week, experts had been alarmed by a pyrocumulus cloud that formed because the Mosquito fire was sending plumes of smoke and ash spewing 40,000 feet into the air.

In Cameron Park, a community southwest of the Mosquito fire where many of the roughly 6,000 people ordered to evacuate had gathered at a community center, some said they were hopeful.

“Thursday, it felt like it was extremely scary, because the fire was spreading really quickly,” said Olivia Moreno, 33, who fled Garden Valley with her family. Now, “I’m feeling a little bit better,” she said.

Mr. Mueller, the Sacramento meteorologist, said that the outlook was positive. Humidity could reach as high as 40 percent by Monday, up from the single digits over the past week.

“The next week looks promising,” he said.

Beyond that, though, he said he could not provide predictions.

Climate scientists noted that the duration of the heat wave had left many parts of California drier than they had been, meaning wildlands in those areas were primed to burn. State public health officials warned that wildfire smoke continued to be a hazard across huge swaths of the state.

And the peak of California's wildfire season, experts have said, could still be on the horizon.

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HEADLINE	09/10 Ukraine gains momentum on Russia
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/10/world/europe/ukraine-izium-russia.html
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine — In a war that has for months been defined by grinding battles between two armies along largely static front lines ranging 1,500 miles, the stunning speed of Ukraine's advance in the country's northeast has reshaped the conflict in a matter of days.</p> <p>On Saturday, Ukrainian soldiers retook a city that had long been a linchpin of the Russian military campaign in the east, Izium, and continued to raise their blue-and-yellow flags over dozens of towns and villages that were occupied by Russia days ago.</p> <p>The northern advance was carried out alongside another Ukrainian campaign, in the country's south. There, thousands of Russian soldiers west of the Dnipro river appear to be increasingly isolated and cut off from resupply, as Ukrainian forces have gradually broken through frontline defenses and shelled Russian targets deep behind the front.</p> <p>While the swift assault in the north appears to have caught Russian forces by surprise, the Ukrainians have been laying the groundwork for it for weeks.</p> <p>Here is a look at the importance of the battle to reclaim Izium, how the Ukrainians set the stage for their offensives and why the events unfolding this week could be a turning point in the war.</p> <p>The Russian siege and capture of a critical hub</p> <p>The first Russian rockets struck the small city of Izium in northeastern Ukraine on Feb. 28, as part of a multipronged invasion that Moscow believed would lead to the rapid collapse of the government in the capital, Kyiv.</p> <p>The city of 40,000 was quickly surrounded, and for three weeks in March, Russia laid siege. Some residents fled, others hid in shelters, and homes, shops and apartments were battered by shelling until Russian troops rolled in.</p> <p>By the time those who remained emerged from their basements at the end of March, Russia was in control. During the months that followed, Russia used Izium as a base of operations and command center, relying on its hub of roads and railways to resupply troops. The city became a military way station for Russia, supporting its campaign to seize Ukraine's eastern Donbas region, which in the spring became the Kremlin's main objective after its failed attack on Kyiv.</p> <p>Supplies flowing through Izium helped sustain Russia's vast expenditure of ammunition in that campaign. At one point in June, Ukraine was almost out of ammunition and Russia was killing as many as 200 Ukrainian soldiers a day, according to Ukrainian officials.</p> <p>Losing ground in the east as Russia used Izium to support its capture of two embattled cities in late June and early July, Ukraine retreated to stronger defensive positions. With that movement and the arrival of Western weapons and ammunition, Ukraine stabilized its defensive lines in the east. Russia stopped gaining ground and Ukraine began setting the stage for a new phase of the war.</p> <p>A summer of shifting forces and disruptive attacks</p> <p>In late July, as precision long-range missile systems began to arrive in Ukraine, Russian ammunition depots behind the front lines began to explode. Ukrainian officials, in statements and social media, would</p>

release one tally after another of what they claimed to have destroyed. And while it was impossible to verify all their claims, there was video evidence of many strikes.

But unlike in the spring, when a convoy of Russian military vehicles stuck north of Kyiv gave a clear indication of Russia's logistical problems, it was hard to know the toll of the strikes in the late summer. In interviews with Ukrainian political and military leaders throughout August, they all repeated a common sentiment: Just wait.

Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Ukraine's president, said that even if Ukrainian forces hit five depots a night, Russia held vast supplies and it would take time to set the conditions for an offensive.

In addition to using the newly arrived, long-range weapons from the West, Ukraine deployed special forces, sometimes working with partisans, to disrupt Russian activities behind enemy lines — a campaign to target not just supply hubs, ammunition depots and command centers, but also Ukrainians collaborating with the Russian authorities.

When Ukraine struck an airfield in Crimea in early August, the first of what would be a wave of strikes aimed at the territory seized by Russia in 2014, they were not only attacking a Russian stronghold, but preparing for a well-publicized next step — the southern counteroffensive.

The southern offensive begins

Throughout August, Ukraine signaled it was readying to push south with highly visible strikes. Every bridge crossing the Dnipro river, which bisects Ukraine from north to south, was hit time and again in an effort to isolate groups of Russians.

Russia raced to reinforce garrisons on the west side of the river in the southern Kherson region, with analysts estimating that they deployed 15,000 to 25,000 soldiers by mid-August. They pulled concrete from irrigation ditches, according to satellite photos, and reinforced three lines of defense.

At the end of August, Ukraine attacked, saying its forces managed to break through the first line of Russian defenses in multiple locations.

But the state of the offensive remains shrouded in secrecy, as Ukraine and Russian proxies make competing claims, and as the Ukrainian military imposed sweeping new restrictions on access for journalists to the front line, including asking pro-Kyiv military bloggers to not reveal details of troop movements.

It is unclear where that offensive stands. Russia had months to reinforce and fortify the region, but many of its troops may now be straining to resupply. Ukrainian troops have described heavy casualties, and difficult battles in the region. But those troops also reported even steeper Russian losses.

Ukraine's opportunity in the north

Early this week, the first reports began to trickle in from around the city of Kharkiv. Ukrainian troops were on the move, but it was not exactly clear where.

The northeastern city, Ukraine's second-most populous before the war, has been under bombardment by Russian forces since the first hours of the invasion. The shelling has never truly relented, and officials have steadily reported civilian casualties, even as Ukrainian troops drove Russian forces from the outskirts of the city as far as the border, just 25 miles away. Since the spring, fighting has continued but not resulted in major shifts in territory.

The Russian stronghold in Izium, vital to supporting so many phases of the Russian campaign, even when Russian troops became bogged down or slowed to a crawl, did not seem like a weak point.

	<p>But in early September, Ukrainian forces around Kharkiv swept southeast, attacking Russian positions where the defenses had thinned out — in part because of Russia’s persistent manpower problems, but also, likely, because of the Kremlin’s significant redeployment of troops to southern Ukraine.</p> <p>Day after day, Ukrainian forces advanced farther behind Russian lines, moving to surround Iziun and retaking towns and villages in their path. Russian forces fell back in droves, and pro-Kremlin bloggers reacted with shock and dismay at the sudden collapse of defenses. On Friday, Russia’s Defense Ministry said it was reinforcing the Kharkiv region; on Saturday, it confirmed it had pulled forces back to “regroup.”</p> <p>Although the statement sought to portray the withdrawal as a planned move, military equipment left scattered in the region indicated a hasty retreat to avoid encirclement.</p> <p>By Saturday evening, Iziun was among the centers that Russia abandoned, boosting Ukrainian morale, providing Ukraine with its own hub for operations in the east, and depriving Russia of an important center for keeping its war machine moving.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Russia: China endorses, supports invasion
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/11/world/russia-says-that-a-senior-chinese-official-expressed-support-for-the-invasion-of-ukraine.html
GIST	<p>A senior Chinese official offered Beijing’s most robust endorsement yet of Moscow’s war in Ukraine, telling a group of Russian lawmakers on Friday that China “understands and supports Russia,” particularly “on the situation in Ukraine,” according to an official Russian description of the meeting.</p> <p>Li Zhanshu, the third-ranking member of the Communist Party of China, visited Moscow last week after attending an economic forum in the eastern Russian city of Vladivostok, where he met with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. Mr. Li is the highest-level Chinese official to leave the country since the start of the pandemic.</p> <p>Mr. Li traveled in advance of a trip by Xi Jinping, China’s leader, who is expected to go to Kazakhstan on Wednesday and Uzbekistan later in the week, where he will meet with Mr. Putin at a gathering of leaders from the region.</p> <p>Russia is touting warming ties with China as its war drive is facing setbacks, with Ukrainian forces retaking territory in the country’s northeast and some Kremlin allies grumbling about the grinding conflict’s lasting longer than expected.</p> <p>In Vladivostok Mr. Li praised Mr. Putin, saying that under his leadership Russia was “not crushed by the severe sanctions of the United States and the West, but rather in a short period achieved stability and showed resilience.”</p> <p>But it was later in Moscow that he offered his strongest endorsement of the Russian leadership.</p> <p>“We see that the United States and its NATO allies are expanding their presence near the Russian borders, seriously threatening national security and the lives of Russian citizens,” Mr. Li said, according to a description from the Russian Parliament. “We fully understand the necessity of all the measures taken by Russia aimed at protecting its key interests; we are providing our assistance.”</p> <p>“On the Ukrainian issue, we see how they have put Russia in an impossible situation,” he added. “And in this case, Russia made an important choice and responded firmly.”</p> <p>China has tread carefully in addressing the war in Ukraine. The Chinese state news media did not report on Mr. Li’s Ukraine comments and has given his trip modest coverage.</p>

	<p>Russia invaded Ukraine days after the end of the Beijing Olympics. Mr. Xi met with Mr. Putin in Beijing before the start of the Games, releasing a 5,300-word statement that described a friendship with “no limits” between the two countries and a shared ambition to counter the influence of outside forces in their regions, a message aimed squarely at the United States.</p> <p>While Beijing has refused to criticize Mr. Putin’s actions or refer to the conflict as a “war,” it has also been cautious about overtly endorsing it and denied any advance knowledge of Russia’s plans.</p> <p>China has maintained robust trade ties with Russia, buying record levels of its oil in May, June and July as Europe is increasingly shunning Russian petroleum. But China has been careful to avoid violating sanctions on Russia that could lead to its being punished as well.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/10 Drones from China buzz Taiwan’s defense
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/10/world/asia/china-taiwan-drones.html
GIST	<p>TAIPEI, Taiwan — At first the Taiwanese soldiers ignored the drones flying from China. Then, as the flights increased, they fired warning shots. Finally, the soldiers shot one into the sea.</p> <p>In the past month nearly 30 unarmed drones have buzzed two islands belonging to Taiwan near China’s southern coast. The drones were mostly civilian, or unidentified, but were clearly targeting the garrison of Taiwanese soldiers stationed on the rocky outcrops.</p> <p>The drones are adding to tensions between the two sides which have escalated in the past month to new highs. China, which claims self-governed Taiwan as its territory, has intensified the presence of its military in the Taiwan Strait, flying jets and sailing ships ever closer to the island, testing its defenses and raising the risk of conflict.</p> <p>“China is using such harassment to increase pressure, deliberately raising tensions around Taiwan,” said Chieh Chung, an analyst at Taiwan’s National Policy Foundation. “Don’t assume that a civilian drone has nothing to do with military purposes.”</p> <p>The question is how Taiwan will respond to future Chinese drone flights that might enter its airspace and whether it can deter Beijing without provoking conflict. In the past week, in addition to the usual assortment of warplanes, China’s military sent four drones into airspace near Taiwan, the island’s Defense Ministry said. China flew the TB-001, a combat drone also known as the Twin-Tailed Scorpion, on Thursday, and two reconnaissance drones on Friday and Saturday, according to Taiwan.</p> <p>For China, the military drones could be used to collect intelligence. The civilian drones are a new source of domestic propaganda aimed at undermining Taiwan’s image.</p> <p>On Chinese social media, photographs taken by one drone showed two Taiwanese soldiers looking surprised and hapless. Some images showed the contrast between the soaring skyscrapers of the Chinese city of Xiamen and the scrappy conditions of the Taiwanese soldiers on the islands. Chinese commentators mocked soldiers for throwing rocks at the drones.</p> <p>For Taiwan, the drones represent the latest front in China’s mounting campaign of intimidation and psychological warfare, known as “gray zone” tactics. The frequent incursions put pressure on Taiwan’s government to respond firmly. President Tsai Ing-wen has warned China that Taiwan’s military will not stand by in the face of aggression. “We will not provoke disputes, and we will exercise self-restraint, but it does not mean that we will not counter,” she said in a recent speech on the Penghu Islands in the Taiwan Strait.</p> <p>On Sept. 1, two days after Ms. Tsai’s speech, the Taiwanese soldiers downed the civilian drone, a move that was unusual for Taiwan, which has largely been restrained in pushing back against China.</p>

Part of the challenge for Taiwan is that its military is equipped to deal with China's fighter jets but is not accustomed to such low-level but constant disturbances, said Drew Thompson, a former Pentagon official who specialized in China. When the drones first emerged, Taiwan appeared unprepared and without sufficient equipment in place to counter them.

"The army was caught a bit flat-footed," Mr. Thompson said. "Taiwan is still fighting a 20th-century war and needs to be embracing asymmetric strategies of the 21st century."

After the shoot-down of the drone, Taiwan's military rushed extra drone jammers — which can disrupt signals of approaching drones — to its bases on Kinmen and Matsu Islands, said Maj. Gen. Chang Jung-Shun of the Kinmen Defense Command. The two islands, with substantial garrisons, send soldiers to Shiyu, or Lion Islet, the tiny outlying island where soldiers shot down the drone. Fewer than 20 soldiers are posted on the islet, defense analysts said.

The Chinese drones started buzzing the islands after Beijing conducted its large-scale military exercises against Taiwan in response to Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit early last month.

The drone flights are the latest iteration of "gray zone" tactics China has used over the last few years to try to coerce and unnerve Taiwan into submission, while stopping short of war, analysts say. Such tactics have run the gamut from daily flights by fighter jets over the median line of the Taiwan Strait to cyberattacks on civilian institutions like Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

China has steadily increased the number of its military flights around Taiwan in an effort to wear down the readiness of Taiwan's air force, the experts say. Forcing Taiwan's pilots to scramble their jets constantly, on short notice, leads to fatigue and lower morale.

Taiwan has sought to upgrade its capabilities to address China's encroachment and worries in Washington that Taiwan needed to do more to bolster its defenses. The Biden administration approved the sale of more than \$1.1 billion of military arms, including anti-ship missiles and surveillance radar, to Taiwan this month. In the past, some weapons sales, including during the Trump administration, have been larger. Still, Beijing complained that the package would "severely jeopardize" its relations with the United States and urged Washington to revoke the sale.

Taiwan's government also recently announced a hefty increase in its annual military budget. The \$19 billion budget represented a 13.9 percent increase over the previous year, compared with increases of an average of less than 4 percent each prior year since 2017. Some of the new money will be spent on new fighter jets, the defense ministry said.

In comparison, China announced a military budget of \$229 billion earlier this year.

China has thrown large resources into developing drone technology in the past decade, suggesting it will keep using different kinds of the unmanned aerial vehicles against Taiwan, experts say.

"It is clear that drones would have a very large role in any Chinese campaign to conquer Taiwan," said Lyle Goldstein, director of Asia engagement for Defense Priorities, a Washington research group, and a specialist on China's military. "China has made enormous efforts to integrate drone technology into all parts of the People's Liberation Army, as well as related services like the People's Armed Police and the Coast Guard."

Some experts said they thought the commercial drones flown late last month were operated by amateurs having a modicum of fun by buzzing the small number of Taiwanese soldiers on the islands and then posting photos on social media.

Mr. Thompson, the former Pentagon official, said it seemed unlikely that the civilian drones were organized by China's People's Liberation Army, which has typically sought to directly control its operations against Taiwan.

“There is no evidence these commercial drones flown over outlying islands, including Lion Rock, were under military control,” he said.

Other military experts suggested the Chinese military tacitly condoned, or at least tolerated, the flights. Regardless of who sent them, the rising frequency of drones represents a further step on the ladder of escalation between China and Taiwan, said Alan Dupont, a former defense intelligence analyst with the Australian military.

“This is much more serious than it looks,” Mr. Dupont said.

How Taiwan responds to the drones matters for the future. If Taiwan shot down a military drone — such as the “Twin Tailed Scorpion” China sent on Thursday — that could give Beijing an opening to claim hostile action and accuse Taiwan of starting a fight, Mr. Dupont said.

So far, he noted, the Taiwan military has been exercising restraint; even when it took down the drone, it was following standard protocols.

Chang Yan-ting, a retired deputy commander of Taiwan’s Air Force, said soldiers shot the drone down because it flew above military posts, ignored warnings and stayed for more than three minutes.

“We gave it time to fly away,” he said. “The army had no choice but to shoot it down.”

At the height of the Cold War, the islands off Xiamen were a high danger point between the United States and China. After Mao Zedong fired artillery in 1958 at the island of Kinmen, then known as Quemoy, military chiefs in Washington threatened to drop small nuclear bombs in retaliation. President Eisenhower rejected the advice.

But for now, Taiwan’s military could use a softer form of deterrence, said Lee Hsi-min, a former chief of the general staff of Taiwan’s armed forces. He suggested posting signs on the islands criticizing China’s leader to make the Chinese recoil.

The signs would read: “Let’s stand up. All the Chinese people have come to overthrow the authoritarian Xi Jinping.”

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HEADLINE	09/11 China far-western Covid lockdown distress
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/11/world/asia/xinjiang-china-covid-lockdown.html
GIST	<p>This summer, Yining, a city in the Xinjiang region of far-western China, celebrated a boom of Chinese tourists seeking a sunny respite from Covid worries in their hometowns. Now Yining is under its own grueling, weekslong pandemic lockdown, with residents calling for help over limited food, difficulty getting medicines and drastic shortages of sanitary pads for women.</p> <p>People in the city of 600,000 have been commanded to stay in their homes since early August, forcing many to rely largely on neighborhood officials to deliver supplies.</p> <p>One resident contacted by telephone said that he received food every five days but that there was little of nutritional value — no fruit, vegetables or meat. He offered only his given name, Zubayr, fearing reprisals from officials over describing the tough conditions.</p> <p>The conditions in Yining that people described online or in phone interviews with The New York Times echoed those of other cities in China that shut down to enforce the government’s commitment to “dynamic zero Covid,” keeping infections of the coronavirus close to zero. Some Shanghai residents complained loudly about food and medicine shortages earlier this year after officials there were overwhelmed during a citywide shutdown that lasted two months.</p>

But Yining received little national attention until lately. It is in the northwest corner of Xinjiang, an ethnically divided region that has been under an intense crackdown aimed at Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other largely Muslim minorities. Late last month, the United Nations' human rights office said the Chinese government's mass detentions and other repressive measures in Xinjiang "may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity."

In recent days, complaints from Yining have generated a surge of online comments in China. Uyghurs abroad have also shared messages describing poor conditions in quarantine facilities for residents suspected of having had close contact with infected people in Yining, which Uyghurs call Ghulja.

"I think what has happened in Shanghai gets more attention, as it's a financial hub, and Chinese people can protest," said Rayhan Asat, a Uyghur human rights lawyer who is a fellow at Yale Law School.

"But things have gone so extreme and compelled people to call for attention," she said of Yining and other locked down parts of Xinjiang. "Many don't have the tools or the audacity to share what's happening to them individually."

In coming weeks, other cities across China may come under similar pressures. The Communist Party will hold a major congress in mid-October, when delegates are poised to anoint Xi Jinping to another five years as national leader, and local authorities are under intense pressure to stanch outbreaks of Covid that could sully or disrupt the meeting.

Other parts of Xinjiang, including the regional capital, Urumqi, have also come under tightening Covid restrictions. A burst of infections has brought increased restrictions on Guiyang, a city of 4.5 million in Guizhou Province in southwest China. The Beijing government said that it had confirmed 10 Covid cases in the capital on Saturday, including nine already in isolation as suspected close contacts with known cases.

Even scattered cases are a worry for officials preparing to host the party congress in Beijing. On Friday, Sun Chunlan, the vice premier overseeing pandemic efforts, told officials to be especially vigilant on Covid to ensure a successful congress.

"Upgrade the sensitivity of monitoring and early warning," she said, according to Xinhua, China's main state news agency. At the same time, Ms. Sun admonished officials to "reduce the impact of the pandemic on the life and work of the public to a minimum."

Until late July, officials in Yining appeared jubilant about the return of tourists to the area. In past years, many visitors had been deterred by the intimidating security crackdown and warnings across Xinjiang and then by Covid.

With many Chinese people unable to travel abroad and looking for domestic holidays, tourism rebounded to the point that some roads were choked with cars and buses. The Xinjiang government issued rules that it said would prevent Covid's spread while sparing visitors serious disruptions. Officials in the Yining area opened a tourist festival with a ceremony featuring hot-air balloons and horse riding.

But in late July, Ili — the broader area including Yining — began announcing scattered Covid cases every day: four, and then 20, and then 67. Within a week, the area had recorded over 140 cases. Officials have said the outbreak was from an Omicron variant of the coronavirus that originated abroad.

At first, the Xinjiang authorities appeared to hope that they could restrict visitor numbers and tighten up checks without hobbling the tourist resurgence. But in mid-August, the Xinjiang government announced that holiday visits from other parts of China to Yining and other infection hot spots would be curtailed.

The Yining authorities have kept news about the lockdown muted, but in interviews with The Times, residents said they had been ordered to stay at home since early August. On Aug. 13, Ma Xingrui, the

Communist Party secretary of Xinjiang, made a quick visit to the area and put pressure on local officials, reminding them of Mr. Xi's "dynamic zero" Covid goal.

"Take more vigorous and effective measures," Mr. Ma told them, according to an official summary of his comments.

Some of the residents said that food deliveries had been reduced to a monotonous diet of rice, naan or instant noodles. They spoke with The Times on the condition of anonymity because of concerns about a reaction from officials.

A resident named Azad said there had been nothing but instant noodles for two weeks, which he could no longer face more than twice a day. He said it was wreaking havoc with his digestive system. Earlier in the lockdown, there had at least been rice and naan.

Several of the women said in phone interviews that they had been unable to obtain sanitary pads, making life very difficult.

Money is not the main problem, said a woman who gave only her given name, Madina. Items like feminine hygiene products and diapers are often unavailable at official supply stations and simply sell out too quickly to buy online, she said.

Residents have also complained online and in letters to the government about dirty quarantine facilities, chaotic enforcement of isolation orders and older people being taken from their homes for medical observation.

Officials have scrambled to head off the rising frustration in Yining by acknowledging failings. Last week they told journalists that there was no truth in rumors that an older resident had hanged himself after suffering severe hunger. The local official news service last week urged overworked local officials to avoid aggravating angry residents.

"Just think: the members of the public have been locked in their homes for over a month," it said.

On Sunday, the health authorities in Xinjiang said that Yining had detected 12 cases of Covid infection the previous day.

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HEADLINE	09/10 Russian elites, pro-war criticize Putin
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/10/world/europe/russia-ukraine-retreat-putin.html
GIST	<p>As Russian forces hastily retreated in northeastern Ukraine on Saturday in one of their most embarrassing setbacks of the war, President Vladimir V. Putin was at a park in Moscow, presiding over the grand opening of a Ferris wheel.</p> <p>"It's very important for people to be able to relax with friends and family," Mr. Putin intoned.</p> <p>The split-screen contrast was stunning, even for some of Mr. Putin's loudest backers. And it underscored a growing rift between the Kremlin and the invasion's most fervent cheerleaders. For the cheerleaders, Russia's retreat appeared to confirm their worst fears: that senior Russian officials were so concerned with maintaining a business-as-usual atmosphere back home that they had failed to commit the necessary equipment and personnel to fight a long war against a determined enemy.</p> <p>"You're throwing a billion-ruble party," one pro-Russian blogger wrote in a widely circulated post on Saturday, referring to the Putin-led celebrations in Moscow commemorating the 875th anniversary of the city's founding. "What is wrong with you? Not at the time of such a horrible failure."</p>

Even as Moscow celebrated, he wrote, the Russian Army was fighting without enough night vision goggles, flak jackets, first-aid kits or drones. A few hundred miles away, Ukrainian forces retook the Russian military stronghold of Iziun, continuing their rapid advance across the northeast and igniting a dramatic new phase in the war.

The outrage from Russian hawks on Saturday showed that even as Mr. Putin had succeeded in eliminating just about all of the liberal and pro-democracy opposition in Russia's domestic politics, he still faced the risk of discontent from the conservative end of the political spectrum. For the moment, there was little indication that these hawks would turn on Mr. Putin as a result of Ukraine's seemingly successful counteroffensive; but analysts said that their increasing readiness to criticize the military leadership publicly pointed to simmering discontent within the Russian elite.

"Most of these people are in shock and did not think that this could happen," Dmitri Kuznets, who analyzes the war for the Russian-language news outlet Meduza, said in a phone interview. "Most of them are, I think, genuinely angry."

The Kremlin, as usual, tried to minimize the setbacks. The defense ministry described the retreat as a decision "to regroup" its troops, even though the ministry said a day earlier that it was moving to reinforce its defensive positions in the region. The authorities in Moscow carried on with their festive weekend, with fireworks and state television showing hundreds lined up to ride the new, 460-foot-tall Ferris wheel.

But online, Russia's failures were in plain sight — underscoring the startling role that pro-Russian military bloggers on the social network Telegram have played in shaping the narrative of the war. While the Kremlin controls the television airwaves in Russia and has blocked access to Instagram and Facebook, Telegram remains freely accessible and is filled with posts and videos from supporters and opponents of the war alike.

The widely followed pro-war bloggers — some embedded with Russian troops near the front line — amplify the Kremlin's false message that Russia is fighting "Nazis" and refer to Ukrainians in derogatory and dehumanizing ways. But they are also divulging far more detailed — and, analysts say, accurate — information about the battlefield than the Russian Defense Ministry is, which they say is underestimating the enemy and withholding bad news from the public.

One of the bloggers, Yuri Podolyaka, who is from Ukraine but moved to Crimea following its annexation in 2014, told his 2.3 million Telegram followers on Friday that if the military continued to play down its battlefield setbacks, Russians would "cease to trust the Ministry of Defense and soon the government as a whole."

It was the bloggers who first rang alarm bells publicly about a possible Ukrainian counteroffensive in the country's northeast.

On Aug. 30, a Kremlin spokesman held his regular conference call with journalists and repeated his mantra: The invasion of Ukraine was going "in accordance with the plans."

The same day, several Russian bloggers were reporting on social media that something was very much not going according to plan. Ukraine was building up forces for a counterattack near the town of Balakliya, they said, and Russia did not appear in position to defend against it.

"Hello, hello, anybody home?" one asked. "Are we ready to fend off an attack in this direction?"

Days later, it became apparent that the answer was no. Ukrainian forces overran Russia's thin defenses in Balakliya and other nearby towns in northeastern Ukraine. By this weekend, some analysts estimated that the territory retaken by Ukraine amounted to about 1,000 square miles, a potential turning point in what had become a war of attrition this summer.

“It’s time to punish the commanders who allowed these kinds of things,” Maksim Fomin, a pro-Russian blogger from eastern Ukraine, said in a video published on Friday, claiming that Russian forces did not even try to resist as Ukraine’s military swept forward this week.

Some of the bloggers are embedded with military units and work for state-run or pro-Kremlin media outlets, preparing reports for television while providing more detail on their Telegram accounts. Others appear to operate more independently, relying on personal connections for access near the front line and adding their bank details to their Telegram posts to solicit donations.

Mr. Kuznets, a former Russian war correspondent himself, said that Russian military officials appeared to tolerate the presence of war bloggers despite their occasional criticism, in part because they agreed with the bloggers’ hawkish, imperialist views. And the bloggers play a crucial role in spreading the pro-Russian message on social media, where their audience includes both Russians and Ukrainians.

Still, among some bloggers, the anger over the Russian military’s mistakes reached a fever pitch on Saturday. One called Russia’s retreat a “catastrophe,” while others said that it had left the residents who collaborated with Russian forces at the mercy of Ukrainian troops — potentially undermining the credibility of the occupying authorities all across the territory that Russia still holds.

And while the Kremlin still maintains that the invasion is merely a “special military operation,” several bloggers insisted on Saturday that Russia was, in fact, fighting a full-fledged war — not just against Ukraine, but against a united West that is backing Kyiv.

The stunned fury reflects how some analysts believe many in the Russian elite view the war: a campaign rife with incompetence, conducted on the cheap, that can only be won if Mr. Putin mobilizes the nation onto a war footing and declares a draft.

“I am sure that they reflect the opinion of their sources and the people they know and work with,” Mr. Kuznets said. “I think the biggest group among these people believes that it is necessary to fight harder and carry out a mobilization.”

Both Western and Russian analysts said that Mr. Putin would need a draft to sharply expand the size of his invading force. But he appears determined to resist such a measure, which could shatter the passivity with which much of the Russian public has treated the war. In August, 48 percent of Russians told the independent pollster Levada that they were paying little or no attention to the events in Ukraine.

As a result, analysts say, Mr. Putin faces no good options. Escalating a war whose domestic support may turn out to be superficial could stir domestic unrest, while continuing retreats on the battlefield could spur a backlash from hawks who have bought into the Kremlin narrative that Russia is fighting “Nazis” for its very survival.

Ever since Russia retreated in April from its attempt to capture Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, the Kremlin’s goals in the war have been unclear, disorienting Mr. Putin’s supporters, said Rob Lee, a military analyst at the Foreign Policy Research Institute.

“The Ukrainians’ war effort is obvious, it’s understandable, whereas on the Russian side, it was always a question of: What is Russia doing?” Mr. Lee said in a phone interview. “The goals aren’t clear, and how they achieve those goals isn’t clear. If you’re fighting a war and you’re not sure what the ultimate goal is, you’re going to be quite frustrated about that.”

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HEADLINE	09/11 Ukraine begins to shutdown nuclear plant
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/11/world/ukraine-russia-war#zaporizhzhia-nuclear-plant-shutdown

GIST	<p>Ukraine on Sunday began turning off the last working reactor at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, a safety procedure that engineers undertook after ensuring that external power could run the critical cooling equipment needed to prevent a meltdown, the nation’s nuclear regulator said.</p> <p>The move is meant to put the last of six working reactors into a safe state as fighting swirls around the facility in southern Ukraine. But it also means that if the plant is once again cut off from external power, as it has been at least twice in the past three weeks, it would need to rely on diesel generators, whose fuel could run out, to power the safety equipment.</p> <p>“A decision was made to shut down power unit No. 6 and transfer it to the safest state — cold shutdown,” Ukraine’s nuclear regulator, Energoatom, said in a statement.</p> <p>The International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations’ nuclear watchdog, said that its two monitors at the plant were informed of the move and noted that the restoration of a backup power line to the complex means that it has the “electricity it needs for reactor cooling and other safety functions.”</p> <p>Last week, shelling severed the transmission lines that provide external power to the plant — which is occupied by Russian forces but operated by Ukrainian engineers — disconnecting it from Ukraine’s national electricity grid. Ukrainian engineers used the plant’s one active reactor to power the station’s safety and cooling systems because that was more reliable than using the diesel generators, Petro Kotin, the head of Energoatom, said in an interview.</p> <p>The plant has since been reconnected to the national grid. That allowed engineers to begin shutting down the active reactor, which places it in a safer state than when it is “hot,” or actively producing energy. The remaining five reactors are already cycling down.</p> <p>But the plant is far from out of the woods. The company’s statement noted that the risk of further damage to power lines “remains high,” and that if the plant were forced to rely on generators to perform vital cooling functions, the length of time they could run “is limited by the technological resource and the amount of available diesel fuel.”</p> <p>Shutting down all of the reactors also means that a key source of electricity will not be available to a nation already facing a challenging winter. Before the war, the power plant provided 20 percent of Ukraine’s electricity. But energy officials said that the damage to transmission lines that carry electricity away from the plant had been so extensive during the war that it was unlikely it would have provided a reliable source of power, they said.</p> <p>International concern about the safety of the plant has been growing as it has been repeatedly shelled over the past month. Russian forces have turned the sprawling complex into a fortress, parking military equipment close to the reactors and stationing some hundreds of soldiers at the plant.</p> <p>The International Atomic Energy Agency dispatched a team of scientists to the plant more than a week ago, issuing a report that called for the creation of a safe zone around it. But the agency does not have the authority to order the Russians to leave. Despite stationing two monitors at the site, shelling has continued.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Ukraine routs Russians in rapid advances
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/11/world/ukraine-russia-war#ukraine-appears-to-make-push-in-two-other-regions-after-week-of-victories
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine — A day after routing Russian forces in a lightning advance that seized hundreds of square miles and a strategic town in the northeast, Ukraine claimed additional territory on Sunday in an offensive that has swiftly reshaped the battlefield in the nearly 200-day-old war and left Moscow reeling.</p> <p>Ukraine’s rapid advances in the Kharkiv region have significantly weakened Russia’s hold on eastern Ukraine, which it has used as a stronghold to wage its war since February. Ukrainian officials said on</p>

Saturday that their troops had retaken the eastern city of Izium, a strategically important railway hub southeast of Kharkiv that Russian forces seized in the spring after a bloody, weeklong battle.

On Sunday, President Volodymyr Zelensky claimed that Ukrainian forces had recaptured [Chkalovske](#), a village in the Kharkiv region that lies roughly halfway between Izium and Kharkiv city. And the Ukrainian military command described continuing combat in cities in the Donetsk region, part of the stretch of mining towns and rolling fields known as Donbas, one of Russia's main targets of the war.

In Donetsk, Ukrainian forces late on Saturday were fighting on the outskirts of the town of Lyman, the town's mayor, Oleksandr Zhuravlev, told Ukrainian media. Russian troops seized the city in May, largely destroying it.

Ukraine's rapid gains, smashing what had been a monthslong stalemate, have come in part as a result of [increased intelligence sharing with the United States](#), American officials said. Over the summer, as they began to plan a counteroffensive in the northeast in recent days, Ukrainian officials began to offer more real-time intelligence to their American counterparts, a shift that allowed the United States to provide better and more relevant information about Russian weaknesses, officials said.

Ukraine's forces have advanced so quickly around Kharkiv that soldiers are systematically searching villages for explosives and potential saboteurs left behind by retreating Russians. "We are doing a clearing of one locality now," one Ukrainian soldier said by phone, declining to provide his precise location. Using slang for Russian troops, he added: "Looks like the orcs have gone."

The last days have shown "a collapse of Russian troops in a front, and when that psychological collapse starts, it often has a cascading effect; it's very difficult to recover from," Jack Watling, a military expert at the Royal United Services Institute, a defense research group, told the BBC. Russia will be forced to deploy reserves to stabilize its front line, meaning Moscow's forces "will cede the initiative to Ukraine for some time to come," he added.

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HEADLINE	09/10 Ukraine used US intel to plan counterattack
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/10/us/politics/ukraine-military-intelligence.html
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — Senior Ukrainian officials stepped up intelligence sharing with their American counterparts over the summer as they began to plan the counteroffensive that allowed them to make dramatic gains in the northeast in recent days, a shift that allowed the United States to provide better and more relevant information about Russian weaknesses, according to American officials.</p> <p>Throughout the war, the United States has provided Ukraine with information on command posts, ammunition depots and other key nodes in the Russian military lines. Such real-time intelligence has allowed the Ukrainians — who U.S. officials acknowledge have played the decisive role in planning and execution — to target Russian forces, kill senior generals and force ammunition supplies to be moved farther from the Russian front lines.</p> <p>But earlier on, American intelligence officials said they often had a better understanding of Russia's military plans than of Ukraine's. Concerned that sharing their operational plans could highlight weaknesses and discourage continued American support, the Ukrainians were closely guarding their operational plans even as American intelligence was gathering precise details on what the Kremlin was ordering and Russian commanders were planning.</p> <p>But as Ukraine laid its plans to strike back against the Russians, senior leaders in Kyiv decided that sharing more information with the United States would help secure more assistance, American officials said.</p>

Senior U.S. officials declined to say how much details from the counteroffensive plan Ukraine had shared and how much advice the United States had offered. But one official said Americans had “constantly” discussed with Kyiv ways that Ukraine could blunt the Russian advance in the country’s east.

The gains in the northeast, including the recapture of Izium, a key railway hub, were the most important advances Ukraine has made so far, senior American officials said.

It is not yet clear how much broad strategic importance those gains will have, but there are signs that the current offensive could be the early stages of a drive that could push back the Russian front line significantly, military experts and former intelligence officials said.

“I have thought for several months that Ukraine was going to push Russia back to the 23 February lines by the end of the year,” said retired Lt. Gen. Frederick B. Hodges, a former top U.S. Army commander in Europe, referring to the eve of the Russian invasion. “I watch the Russian logistics, and it just looked to me that they cannot sustain this. Their morale and discipline and all their manpower issues — it’s just not sustainable for them to do what they were trying to do.”

General Hodges said the recent success indicated that Ukraine’s efforts to retake land in the south and east could unfold more quickly than he had previously assessed, even setting the stage for an attempt to retake Crimea next year. Other experts agreed that the tide might be turning for Ukraine.

“The Ukrainian military’s counteroffensive is moving faster and taking terrain even faster than expected,” said Mick Mulroy, a former Pentagon official and C.I.A. officer. “Now is the time for the Ukrainian army to exploit every opportunity they have to degrade and destroy the Russian capacity to fight.”

Current and former U.S. officials praised the sophistication of the Ukrainian preparations for the counteroffensive. The decision by Ukraine to tout its counteroffensive in the south before striking in the northeast is a standard technique for misdirection used by the American Special Operations troops, who have been training the Ukrainians since the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

“These guys have been trained for eight years by Special Ops,” said Evelyn Farkas, the top Pentagon official for Ukraine and Russia in the Obama administration. “They’ve been taught about irregular warfare. They’ve been taught by our intelligence operators about deception and psychological operations.”

Even though messaging around the push in the south may have been something of a feint, officials say that strike also has importance. Even small gains in the south will make it far more difficult for Russian forces to capture the port city of Odesa, a wartime goal of President Vladimir V. Putin.

Nevertheless, current U.S. officials were reserved on Saturday, saying it was too early to determine whether the Ukrainian military could keep up its drive.

The offensive will strain the Ukrainians, who have suffered from shortages in supply, particularly artillery rounds. Their army, too, has taken tough casualties. Going on the offensive is harder and more difficult to maintain than a defense. Some American officials believe the more successful Ukraine is in the next few days, the more Russia will look for ways to strike back.

But the new offensive has demonstrated how the Russian forces have not been able to overcome the fundamental problems laid bare in the opening days of the conflict, American officials said.

The Russian military continues to struggle to get its secure communications to work and to solve its logistics problems. It has also not been able to ramp up its industrial base to meet the demands of the war, multiple officials said. Ukrainian air defenses still threaten Russian aircraft, hampering Moscow from using the full potential of its military.

Russia could revisit its decision not to conduct a large-scale draft to build forces for a renewed push into Ukraine. Mr. Putin could also look to use different tactics in a new phase of the war, especially if he thinks

	<p>Ukraine's morale receives a serious boost from the successful counteroffensive. Some senior Ukrainian officials believe the Russians could resort to cyberattacks targeting a broad swath of the country.</p> <p>Georgii Dubynskyi, Ukraine's deputy minister of digital transformation, predicted on Friday that in the coming months, as the weather cools, Russia would try again to attack the Ukrainian energy grid, damaging electrical transmission or shutting down pipelines.</p> <p>"The next phase is, they will try to defeat our energy and financial sectors," Mr. Dubynskyi said. "We have seen this scenario before."</p> <p>Russia attacked Ukraine's energy grid in 2015. But this time, Ukraine expects Russia to use more targeted phishing attacks to take down parts of the energy grid or combine cyberattacks with a kinetic bombing campaign.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/10 Idaho's largest wildfire in 2022 still growing
SOURCE	https://www.krem.com/article/news/local/wildfire/moose-fire-lemhi-county-salmon-challis-national-forest-wildfire/277-554f19f7-15dd-4d49-924d-f7519a6dfdf6
GIST	<p>SALMON, Idaho —The Moose Fire northwest of Salmon has burned an estimated 125,993 acres and is 37% contained as of Saturday, Sept. 10. The fire area -- roughly 196 square miles -- is more than double the Boise city limits.</p> <p>On the night of Sept. 7, a thunderstorm rolled over the area of the Moose Fire, bringing wind gusts up to 55 mph and causing extreme fire behavior, leading to the fire crossing Ridge Road and moving downhill towards the town of Salmon around 9 p.m., fire officials said.</p> <p>Due to the extreme fire behavior, the Lemhi County Sheriff's Office issued immediate evacuations for Zone 1 (Fairgrounds to Tower Creek) and Zone 11 (Fairgrounds to Moore Creek Road).</p> <p>Additionally, Zone 12 (upper Fairmont to Hayhook Drive) and Zone 13 (16th Street to Pollard Creek, including Leesburg/BlackRock) were placed in 'SET' evacuation status.</p> <p>The Beartrack Mine and Leesburg areas were evacuated Sept. 6. All remaining zones are in "READY" status. Click here evacuation updates from the Lemhi County Sherriff's Office.</p> <p>Air quality for the Lemhi Valley, as measured from the Salmon station, is expected to be "slightly moderated" Saturday as northeast winds move smoke away from the area. Idaho DEQ air quality forecasts for the area are posted here.</p> <p>Closure and alternate route information are posted in this modified closure order issued Wednesday, Aug. 17.</p> <p>The main Salmon River is open to rafters and the Spring Creek Boat Launch is open to public use. Questions on river launches can be answered by emailing middlefork@fs.fed.us. For river access updates, call 208-756-5587.</p> <p>Investigators have determined the Moose Fire was human-caused, but the specific circumstances as to how it started remain under investigation.</p> <p>809 firefighters are fighting the Moose Fire, which is burning grass, brush and timber -- much of it dead and downed fuel. It started near the confluence of Moose Creek and the Salmon River.</p> <p>A helicopter accident that occurred the afternoon of July 20 on the Moose Fire is under investigation. Both pilots on board were killed, the Lemhi County County Sheriff's Office confirmed Friday. They were identified as Thomas Hayes, 41, of Post Falls, Idaho, and Jared Bird, 36, of Anchorage, Alaska.</p>

	The sheriff's office said they died after being extricated and taken to medical facilities. An online fundraiser in Hayes's honor has been created to help his father pay for a funeral and to make a donation to the Boise-based Wildland Firefighter Foundation in his memory. An online fundraiser for Bird's family is also underway. GoFundMe has verified both fundraisers.
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HEADLINE	09/10 Smoke impact to air quality in eastern WA
SOURCE	https://www.krem.com/article/weather/krem-2-weather-forecast/293-a0f43ff2-aa37-4afc-bcfc-b661849f38c1
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — A ridge of high pressure is currently over the region, resulting in clear skies (except for the smoke and haze) and light winds. Smoke poured into Eastern Washington from North Idaho and Western Montana Friday with brisk easterly and northeasterly winds. While those winds have lightened up, the smoke isn't going anywhere. Air quality will probably linger in the "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" to "Unhealthy" category for at least the remainder of the weekend.</p> <p>As the ridge pushes east, we will see a shift in our wind pattern to a more southwesterly flow. There will also be an increase in moisture from the south. This will bring us increased cloud cover. While the southwesterly winds may move some of the Idaho and Montana smoke out, the smoke from Oregon's Cedar Creek Fire may come blowing back in. Temperatures will stay warm under this weather pattern, with highs in the middle and upper 80s on Sunday.</p> <p>The increase in moisture may bring a sprinkle on Monday along with mostly cloudy skies, but overall the upcoming week's forecast looks dry. There is only a slight chance of showers again on Thursday. Temperatures will show a gradual cooling trend which will take us from the 80s to the 70s. In the 10-14 day period it looks like we'll start to see a cooler weather pattern set up that will feel more fall-like with highs in the low 70s.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/10 NICC: 18 large fires OR, WA; evacuations
SOURCE	https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Oregon-weather-fire-evacuations-power-outages-17432548.php
GIST	<p>OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — There were 18 large fires burning in Oregon and Washington Saturday, leading to evacuations and targeted power outages in Oregon as the challenge of dry and windy conditions continued in the region.</p> <p>According to the Northwest Interagency Coordination Center, there are nearly 406 square miles (1051 square kilometers) of active, uncontained fires and nearly 5,000 people on the ground fighting them in the two states.</p> <p>The blazes are among more than 90 active fires across the country, including in Montana, California and Idaho, the National Interagency Fire Center said. Scientists say climate change has made the West warmer and drier over the last three decades and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive.</p> <p>In Washington state, the Goat Rocks Fire, south of Mount Rainier National Park, was started by lightning and has led to the closure of U.S. Highway 12 and the evacuation of neighborhoods east of the city of Packwood. Evacuations were also issued for several communities in Cowlitz County in response to the Kalama fire in Gifford Pinchot National Forest southwest of Mount St. Helens.</p> <p>Another mountain pass on U.S. Highway 2 was closed Saturday because of the Bolt Creek Fire, which sparked evacuations for 300 to 400 homes and was dropping ash in Everett and blowing smoke into the suburbs of Seattle.</p> <p>That fire grew quickly throughout the day, doubling over about two hours to about 3 square miles (nearly 8 square kilometers), and was burning timber in rugged terrain, according to the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.</p>

Peter Mongillo, a spokesman with Snohomish Regional Fire and Rescue, was nearby as part of the overall incident command center, and said that high-voltage transmission lines owned by Bonneville Power Administration that run across the Cascade Mountains were at risk because of the amount of smoke and particulates in the air, which can affect the lines.

“It increases the chances of arcing and starting a fire or even shutting down the power line,” he said in a phone interview.

Mongillo said that it was recommended that Bonneville turn the lines off, but he said that for now Bonneville is keeping the lines on and will continue to monitor.

Bonneville spokesman Kevin Wingert said that there are three lines in the area, and that right now the “location of the fire and the density of smoke is such that we do not have an operational or safety need to take those lines out of service.”

Wingert said that if conditions changed and those lines did need to be taken out of service, there would likely be no loss in service to customers due to other transmission lines that are in service. Both Puget Sound Energy, which covers customers in Seattle and elsewhere and Snohomish County Public Utility District are Bonneville customers.

Mongillo said that there are firefighters on the ground all up and down Highway 2 but they haven’t been able to get aerial support on the fire because of the high level of smoke and whipping winds.

“It’s a wait and see right now,” he said. “We’re looking at about 24 hours of winds coming from the east blowing to the west.”

A red flag warning in Washington remains in effect through Sunday night, meaning that high temperatures, low humidity and strong winds will complicate fire conditions.

In Oregon, the Clackamas County Sheriff’s Office announced the evacuation order of campers from Milo McIver State Park late Friday night, which is about 24 miles (38.6 kilometers) southeast of Portland. Early Saturday morning, residents in several communities west of the park were told to be ready to evacuate.

In hopes of lessening the risk of more fires, Portland General Electric initially halted power to about 30,000 customers in 12 service areas but that number increased to more than 37,000 by Saturday. By late Saturday afternoon that number had dropped back down to about 30,000. Pacific Power shut down service to more than 7,000 customers in a small community on the Pacific Coast, where a wildfire burned two years ago, and in pockets southeast of the state capitol of Salem. The number of Pacific Power customers without service increased to 12,000 on Saturday.

The largest fire in Oregon is the Double Creek Fire burning in the northeastern part of the state near the Idaho border. As of Saturday, the fire had burned more than 230 square miles (595 square kilometers). The Northwest Interagency Coordination Center said that the fire grew by 65 square miles (168 square kilometers) overnight.

In central Oregon, the Cedar Creek Fire east of Oakridge has burned nearly 81 square miles (210 square kilometers). On Friday, officials ordered residents to immediately leave the greater Oakridge, Westfir and High Prairie areas due to increased fire activity.

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HEADLINE	09/10 Farmers’ Almanac predicts a WA ‘frosty fall’
SOURCE	https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/weather-news/article265563926.html
GIST	On Sept. 22, the sun will align perfectly with the equator, giving the northern and southern hemispheres an equal amount of sunlight and signaling the Autumnal Equinox, which signals the astronomical start of fall.

After a scorching summer that saw many areas of Washington record some of their hottest summer weather ever, cooler weather will relieve many Washingtonians.

But when will the temperatures cool down for good, and should the Pacific Northwest expect snow before we hit winter-proper?

FALL FORECAST

Farmers' Almanac, which predicts long-range weather forecasts and boasts an 80-85% accuracy in its forecasting, is expecting a frosty fall with typical precipitation for the Northwest.

Farmers' Almanac groups regions together for its forecast — Washington falls in with Idaho and Oregon as part of the Northwest region.

Typical precipitation for Washington varies wildly depending on where you are in the state, but the average precipitation statewide is approximately 1.75 inches in September, 4 inches in October and 6.25 inches in November, according to Weather and Climate.

The average high temperature in the state also widely varies depending on location. The statewide average high temperature in September is 65 degrees and by November will drop to the mid-30s in the eastern half of the state and mid-40s in the western half.

Before Washington hits frigid weather, the state will look its best throughout October. Farmers' Almanac forecasts that the best time to see fall foliage throughout the Evergreen State will be Oct. 12-28.

But if Farmers' Almanac's snow forecast is correct, the fall foliage may end early as snow comes down and covers the leaves.

The first snowfall of the season for Washington is forecast for Oct. 20-23 — although the forecast doesn't specify precisely where in Washington, that weekend kicks off a busy weather month that'll see "very unsettled weather" in the first few days of November and "fair, then stormy" weather throughout the middle of the month.

WHEN TO HIT THE ROAD AND WHEN TO STAY HOME

Looking for an ideal time to vacation before it gets too cold?

Sept. 12-19 will be the best time to vacation this month. Otherwise, you may have to wait until the first week of October, which is forecast to be "fair and dry" from Oct. 1-3 before turning to "very unsettled weather."

Much of October and November will be meteorologically active in the Northwest, with the only extended reprieve from stormy weather coming Oct. 8-11, Nov. 4-7, and Nov. 28-30.

Thanksgiving Week is forecast to have scattered showers and snow in the upper elevations from Nov. 20-23, and then a small break in the rain before more storms, gale force winds, and heavy snow in the mountains will sweep over the Evergreen State from Nov. 24-27.

The skies will clear for December with the occasional storm coming inland from the Pacific Ocean and stormy along the coastal plain for Christmas.

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HEADLINE	09/09 Teachers strike: school funding, staffing
SOURCE	https://crosscut.com/news/2022/09/wa-teachers-strikes-highlight-school-funding-staffing-woes

GIST

Pay is just one point of contention in negotiations between striking Seattle teachers and the state's largest school district. But the growing responsibilities for teachers and schools – and their growing budgets – could force another statewide reckoning on school funding.

Most of the money Seattle Public Schools uses to pay its teachers and other staff comes from a per-pupil allocation from state tax dollars. For this school year, the state of Washington [added \\$236 million](#) for a 5.5% inflation adjustment for statewide K-12 salary increases. The Seattle school district has offered to bump that up to 6.5%.

School districts can – and often do – augment teacher pay, and that money often needs to be found by cutting programs or raising the voter-approved operating levies. For example, the [Olympia School District is looking to cut \\$17.5 million](#) from next year's budget, after approving an increase that adds up to 18% over three years, according to *The Olympian*.

Pay isn't the only thing on negotiating tables during the first strike in seven years in Seattle.

The Seattle Education Association, the union that represents teachers and other educators, has also called for increased nurses, student mental health and social worker supports at schools, as well as for assurances of classroom staffing as the Seattle district considers a transition to placing more English Language Learners and special education students in general education classrooms.

Union president Jennifer Matter said that without a guarantee of enough instructional assistants in the classroom, teachers are concerned about how the new tasks will affect classroom workloads.

“[A]s much as we want to be able to give one-on-one support to all the students, you have... a range of 28 to 32 students in the class,” Matter said. “And no one teacher can do that all on their own. So to provide students with IEPs, that individualized attention and support, which is federally mandated, you need to have the staffing to do it.”

The Seattle Education Association represents 6,000 school employees – including instructional assistants, counselors and 3,700 teachers – in the Seattle Public Schools.

The [Seattle district initially offered a 6.5% increase](#) for teachers over the next year, and 2% and 2.1% increases over the following two years, plus retention bonuses. The [Seattle Education Association](#) is asking for greater increases, although the union did not disclose how much more than the state COLA they were seeking.

Neither the district nor the union disclosed how the differences between the proposals would impact the district's \$1.14 billion general operating budget. As of now, [about 43.3% of the district general fund is budgeted for certificated salaries](#), which includes teachers. About 18.3% of the general fund is allocated for classified salaries, which would include all other employees, including nurses and paraeducators.

Salaries for teachers at Seattle Public Schools range from \$63,180 for a first-year teacher to \$123,506 at the top of the base pay scale, with the potential for further bonuses depending on other duties or having advanced degrees. According to an analysis of salaries from an OSPI school salary database, the average Seattle teacher salary was around \$88,897 in 2020-21.

Seattle paraeducators, who are also members of the Seattle Education Association, get paid \$19.22 an hour to start and \$40.05 at the top of the scale.

Teachers said the planned change to a more inclusive classroom structure is a bigger concern than their salary increases.

Those plans were laid out in Seattle this past spring with administrators, parents and teachers. Teachers say they want to make sure that classrooms get enough support from instructional assistants, who are the ones assigned to provide additional help for students who need it.

“The district wants to essentially reorganize the entire model – and with some good reasons,” said Heather Barker, who teaches third grade at Sanislo Elementary School in the Delridge neighborhood. “They’re saying, ‘We’re redoing it, just trust us that it’s going to work.’ And we are saying, ‘Put it in writing.’”

Parent Kenton Kodner, whose son Eli Kodner is a middle-schooler, said he came to Sanislo Elementary’s picket line in West Seattle to support the teachers. “I have no problem supporting the teachers who got our children through the pandemic. I will be forever grateful for that emotional lifeline for our kids,” Kodner said.

Kodner, who said this “isn’t the first time I’ve brought my son to a strike line,” said nonetheless he wishes that the district and the teachers could have come to an agreement before the start of school. “I’m frustrated over using children as bargaining chips.”

Seattle School Board Director Vivian Song Maritz said in a statement posted to Facebook that school districts are limited in how they can spend funds – and reallocating unrestricted funds comes at the cost of other programs.

“My intention here is explain what exactly is *unyielding* – and that is how much money we get to spend. It makes the bargaining particularly challenging,” Song Maritz wrote.

In an open letter, Seattle School Board Director Lisa Rivera-Smith also said the state would have to reconsider how it funds schools.

“We can’t squeeze the water that we need to live, out of the rocks they’ve given us,” Rivera-Smith wrote.

Seattle is one of several Washington school districts to experience an educator strike this year. The Kent School District settled on a contract this week, a week after a strike delayed the scheduled start of school. The Eatonville district, east of Olympia, also has been delayed after a strike this week.

The [North Thurston](#) district, north of Olympia in Lacey, and the Port Angeles district settled contracts with their teachers before the start of school, averting strikes that would have disrupted classes.

Washington Education Association President Larry Delaney said that issues of pay, student mental health supports and workload have been common themes in these latest contract negotiations – although many of the issues have long been recognized by both teachers and administrators.

“We need to assure that educators can earn a wage that allows them to live in the communities where they work. Wages are just a piece of it. There’s also case load, class size,” Delaney said.

Still, as compensation and staffing demands rise, districts are stretching their budgets and seeking cuts – or asking communities to raise their taxes.

Delaney said teachers and school staff asking for increased compensation and support may risk layoffs and program cuts or increased operations levies – but he believes the bigger issue is how Washington residents and politicians decide to continue to pay for K-12 public schools.

“We need to have an open and honest conversation about students’ needs in 2022 and beyond,” Delaney said. “Those needs have evolved and our funding for those needs have not.”

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HEADLINE	09/10 West coast tribal fisheries disaster declared
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/2022/09/10/tribal-fisheries-disaster/
GIST	For generations upon generations, the Yurok tribe has relied on Chinook salmon from the Klamath River in Northern California for ceremonies, subsistence and commercial gain.

But in 2019, less than 40 percent of the usual number of salmon returned to the river — resulting in what tribal Chairman Joseph L. James [called](#) an “utter failure” of that year’s stock.

The Yurok tribe isn’t alone. Between 2014 and 2019, tribal salmon fisheries failed in Washington state rivers, too.

On Sept. 1, the Commerce Department [declared](#) fishery disasters for several West Coast tribes and allocated \$17.4 million in disaster assistance in response. The assistance will be used to shore up everything from habitat restoration to commercial and subsistence fishers.

West Coast salmon have been under stress for years. After spawning in freshwater rivers, the fish migrate to the ocean to feed, then come back year after year to spawn. Despite management and conservation efforts, in some rivers, the number of returning fish is dwindling or uncertain.

Researchers blame everything from pollution to river dams that prevent access to spawning grounds to rising ocean temperatures connected to climate change.

Some stocks of Chinook salmon have been designated [threatened](#) and endangered in their river habitats. Others are considered threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Although fishing treaties vary, many [reserve](#) tribal rights to fish in “usual and accustomed” places or in waters associated with reservations. Tribes and bands also participate in fisheries management and conservation.

The fishery failures not only cut off valuable income sources for tribal entities but also disrupt traditional uses and even household food sources. The Upper Skagit tribe, which catches coho and sockeye salmon in the Upper Skagit River before it drains into Puget Sound, sees fishing “as a way of life,” then-tribal Chair Jennifer R. Washington [wrote in 2019](#). “With few or no fish available to harvest because of low abundance, the entire community suffers.” The tribe will receive [about \\$300,000 in disaster assistance](#), according to the Commerce Department.

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HEADLINE	09/10 Global drought saps hydropower; rethink?
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/global-drought-saps-hydropower-complicating-clean-energy-push-11662758968?mod=hp_lead_pos3
GIST	<p>Record drought across the globe this year dried up rivers and reservoirs and sapped the world’s largest source of renewable electricity: hydropower.</p> <p>The dip in electricity generated by the flow of water across dams in China, Europe and the U.S. stifled power production. In some places, it has caused factories and smelters to shut down for weeks on end.</p> <p>California’s energy grid faced its biggest blackout risk since 2020 this week because of record demand and lack of electricity supply, including from water-starved hydropower stations.</p> <p>As governments push a transition away from fossil fuels and climate change upends the reliability of nature-driven energy sources, the drought has also raised questions about how hydropower fits into the energy mix.</p> <p>“We’re becoming more reliant on electricity for our needs such as transport and heat, but at the same time the risks to the energy system are increasing. It’s a double-whammy effect,” said Duncan Sinclair, a partner with a focus on energy infrastructure at consulting firm Baringa.</p> <p>The drop in output from hydropower, an energy technology long thought to be tried and true, is causing a rethink of how it fits into a resilient energy system, according to energy executives, analysts and</p>

government planners. Drought frequency and duration has increased by nearly a third globally since 2000, according to the World Meteorological Organization, a United Nations body.

“The entire industry right now is really trying to figure out what these types of extreme events mean for our electrical infrastructure in terms of planning and stresses on the grid,” said Elliot Mainzer, chief executive at the California Independent System Operator. “The past is no longer a predictor of the future.”

Hydropower generated 16% of the world’s electricity in 2021, more than all other sources of renewable energy combined, according to data from the International Hydropower Association. Both major types of hydro technology are affected by drought. Plants that use river currents to spin turbines generated less due to shallow water levels. Those that collect or pump water into reservoirs to be used later, storing the water’s kinetic energy like a giant battery, were hit by low rainfall and higher evaporation due to heat.

Parts of China endured the hottest and driest summer in 60 years. The Yangtze River is at the lowest level since records began. Water flowing to nearby hydropower stations has halved. This led the government of Sichuan to [order the closure of factories](#) in 19 cities last month to ration power.

Apple supplier [Foxconn Technology Group](#) and auto makers [Volkswagen](#) AG and [Toyota Motor](#) Corp. [were hit by power supply curbs](#).

In the U.S., two of [the nation’s largest reservoirs](#), Lake Mead and Lake Powell, have fallen to historically low levels. A severe heat wave that has swept much of the Western U.S. forced the California ISO to issue several consecutive calls for electricity conservation to alleviate strain on the grid and take measures to bring all available resources online. The heat wave, which began at the end of August, is expected to ease this weekend.

For Europe, the combination of low rainfall and [a record heat wave](#) added to an energy system already in crisis from [Russia’s cuts to natural-gas supply](#). Lack of hydro played a role in electricity prices [hitting record highs](#) in recent weeks.

Norway is the region’s largest producer of hydroelectricity due to an abundance of rivers and deep valleys. The Norwegian government warned in early August that the country may have to limit electricity exports to the U.K., Germany, Sweden, Finland and Denmark, for the first time in history in the coming months. Statkraft AS, Norway’s largest producer of hydroelectric power, is limiting production now to conserve water for the higher-demand months ahead, said the utility’s chief executive officer, Christian Rynning-Tønnesen, in an interview.

The transition away from fossil fuels banks on electrons generated from clean sources and sent along long-distance transmission lines to charge cars, power factories and run heat pumps.

Part of the appeal of hydropower is that it can be used to store electricity by pumping water into reservoirs and letting the water flow later when needed. This gives it a complementary role to more intermittent sources such as solar or wind, which rely more on daily weather conditions.

“It can fill the gaps in between solar and wind generation, for instance,” said Luiza Demoro, head of energy transitions at research provider BloombergNEF. “We need to understand that hydro might change and be less reliable than it has been in the past.”

Other forms of energy storage are competing to take its place. Giant arrays of batteries that charge at night when prices are cheaper and help balance the grid during the day are being installed by utilities and asset managers. Investment in battery storage is expected to more than double this year, led by grid-scale projects in China and the U.S., according to the International Energy Agency.

Investors appear to be growing wary of hydro. Investment in new projects has been declining since 2020, data from the IEA showed. The organization is forecasting another drop this year. Some countries are continuing to build new dams, notably China.

	<p>One of the unintended consequences of hydro's bad summer is increased use of coal to fill in the gaps, analysts say. Globally, coal consumption rose nearly 6% in 2021, contributing significantly to the biggest annual increase in energy-related CO2 emissions on record, according to the IEA. High natural-gas prices were another factor, as power plants switched fuels to save on costs.</p> <p>Coal use remains at an elevated level this year, with some of the world's biggest economies increasing short-term coal purchases to ensure sufficient supplies of electricity.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/09 OSPI: WA student test scores on the rise
SOURCE	https://mynorthwest.com/3625697/washington-students-test-scores-rise-pandemic-drop-superintendent/
GIST	<p>The Washington state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) released its data from the spring 2022 standardized state education assessment.</p> <p>This was the first year since the COVID-19 pandemic began where there was “typical” statewide testing.</p> <p>Data released shows that 70% of Washington students are proficient or making progress over their fall 2021 test scores, leading education experts to have hope for a recovery back to pre-pandemic levels.</p> <p>When broken down by subject, for English and language arts testing, more than 41% of students were proficient in both fall 2021 and spring 2022, and another 10.2% accelerated into proficiency during the year. Nearly 15% of students made progress but are not yet proficient. In mathematics, nearly 30% of students were proficient from fall to spring and 9.7% accelerated into proficiency during the year. 20.7% of students made progress but are not yet proficient.</p> <p>The drop in test scores is pretty standard for the country, especially considering the hardships in education during the pandemic.</p> <p>The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the national standardized test, data shows that student scores in reading and math declined from 2020 to 2022 in all grade levels assessed, illustrating how the pandemic has impacted students across the country similarly. Overall, proficiency is down from pre-pandemic spring 2019 levels, but an improvement from fall 2021 to spring 2022 can still be seen.</p> <p>The demographics struggling the hardest to catch back up to their pre-pandemic testing levels tend to come from low-income families, students with disabilities, and students who are multilingual/English learners; as well as students who are American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. OSPI says that at the federal, state, and local levels, supporting students furthest from educational justice and students most impacted by the pandemic has remained a top priority in providing the necessary support to students.</p> <p>“This data are encouraging,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal. “There is no question that COVID-19 significantly impacted the learning environment. The disruptions of remote learning, quarantine, isolation, and transitioning back in person after periods of learning remotely are evident in the decrease in proficiency from spring 2019 to spring 2022. However, the incredible work of our educators and families to support students is evident in the recovery we are seeing across grade levels and subjects.”</p> <p>Families, policymakers, and community members should be cautious though when looking at state assessment scores as the main indicator of student learning and growth. OSPI says that engagement, attendance, grades, classroom-based assignments and tests all provide important and timely information about individual students’ progress to their families and educators as well.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/09 Russia sends reinforcements to Kharkiv
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SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/09/russia-kharkiv-reinforcements-ukraine-counterattack
GIST	<p>Moscow is sending columns of military reinforcements to Ukraine's Kharkiv region, according to reports in Russian media, after the first major Ukrainian counterattack since spring made big territorial gains this week.</p> <p>Ukrainian troops have pushed Russian forces out of a number of settlements in the region that Moscow occupied since the first days of its invasion, and on Friday Ukraine's army appeared to be continuing its speedy advance.</p> <p>In a video address late on Friday President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said Ukrainian forces had liberated more than 30 settlements in the Kharkiv region.</p> <p>A Russian-installed official in the occupied part of Kharkiv region admitted Moscow's troops were on the back foot. "The very fact of a breach of our defences is already a substantial victory for the Ukrainian armed forces," Vitaly Ganchev told state television, adding that Ukraine's advance had been "very sharp and rapid".</p> <p>Ganchev said "fierce battles" were under way near the town Balakliia, retaken by Ukraine on Thursday. "We do not control Balakliia. Attempts are being made to dislodge the Ukrainian forces, but there are fierce battles and our troops are being held back on the approaches."</p> <p>For weeks, Ukrainian officials had telegraphed plans for a planned counterattack in the southern Kherson region, but instead the main focus of this week's counterattack has been Kharkiv in the north-east, taking everyone, including apparently the Russians, by surprise.</p> <p>Moscow responded on Friday by firing rockets into the centre of the city, according to local officials, who said that at least 10 people, including three children, were wounded in an attack that Zelenskiy's chief of staff condemned as revenge for Ukrainian success on the battlefield.</p> <p>"For every success of Ukraine's armed forces, for every victory, Russians ... answer with strikes on innocent people," Andriy Yermak wrote on Telegram, confirming that children were among the wounded. The rockets hit a children's arts centre and a school, as well as private homes, Kharkiv's mayor, Ihor Terekhov, said.</p> <p>The next major Ukrainian target is likely to be the city of Kupiansk. On Thursday, Russian occupation authorities said they planned to evacuate women and children from Kupiansk, citing Ukrainian artillery strikes on the town.</p> <p>A photograph shared on social media on Friday appeared to show Ukrainian forces at one of the entrances to the city, posing with a Ukrainian flag. The photograph could not be immediately verified.</p> <p>The Institute for the Study of War, a US-based thinktank, said Ukrainian forces could retake the city over the next three days. Taking the city would sever communication links between occupied areas and "hinder Russian efforts to support offensive and defence operations", the institute said.</p> <p>Zelenskiy said in his nightly video address on Thursday that Ukrainian forces had recaptured more than 1,000 sq km of territory from the Russians since the beginning of September.</p> <p>"Our heroes have already liberated dozens of settlements. And today this movement continued, there are new results," the president said.</p> <p>Zelenskiy's adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said the successful counteroffensive showed Ukraine had "proved the capability of de-occupying its territories" and was able to use the weapons supplied to Kyiv by western countries.</p> <p>"There will be no freezing of the conflict," Podolyak tweeted.</p>

Top US officials expressed approval of the Ukrainian advance. “We see Ukraine making real, demonstrable progress in a deliberate way,” said the secretary of state, Antony Blinken, speaking at Nato headquarters in Brussels on Friday, the day after he made a surprise visit to Kyiv.

Blinken cautioned against over-optimism, however, and warned that the fighting was likely to drag on for some time. “There are a huge number of Russian forces that are in Ukraine, and unfortunately, tragically, horrifically, President Putin has demonstrated that he will throw a lot of people into this at huge cost to Russia,” he said.

William Burns, the head of the CIA, said Vladimir Putin had underestimated both Ukrainian resolve and that of the international community.

“Putin’s bet right now is that he is going to be tougher than the Ukrainians, the Europeans, the Americans ... I believe, and my colleagues at CIA believe, that Putin is as wrong about that bet as he was profoundly wrong in his assumptions going back to last February about Ukrainian will to resist,” Burns said at a conference in Washington, in comments reported by the New York Times.

“Not only has the weakness of the Russian military been exposed ... but there is going to be long-term damage done to the Russian economy and to generations of Russians,” he said.

Putin, speaking this week, claimed Russia had “lost nothing” over the six months of war in Ukraine, but there has been alarm among Russian nationalists over Ukraine’s military successes this week.

Some Russian military commentators criticised their army for not giving ample warning to residents of Balakliia that they would withdraw, leaving their local accomplices to face the wrath of Ukrainian authorities.

Iryna Vereshchuk, Ukraine’s minister for the temporarily occupied territories, announced on Friday that Kyiv would create an agency for the de-occupied territories to coordinate different branches of the state and government in the regions.

“[The agency] will mean that de-occupation and then reintegration will be done as effectively and quickly as possible,” Vereshchuk said on Ukrainian television.

She said there had been an increase of calls to a government hotline for people in the occupied territories who want to leave, but there were no official humanitarian corridors agreed with Russia.

“We have written to Russia to open humanitarian corridors but received a refusal, so we are asking the IAEA, the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to force Russia to open humanitarian corridors,” Vereshchuk said.

At present, there are only about three crossing points along the frontlines for the millions of civilians living in the occupied areas. People wait for days in queues, often surrounded by shelling.

In the first months of the war, Russia agreed to open official corridors to allow for mass evacuations from occupied areas such as the Kyiv region and Mariupol, but only after weeks of pressure from international leaders and the UN.

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HEADLINE	09/10 Day 199 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/10/ukraine-russia-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-199-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Russia said on Friday it was dispatching reinforcements to the Kharkiv region in eastern Ukraine, where Kyiv’s forces have announced robust gains as part of a broader counter-

	<p>offensive. Russian state media broadcast footage of columns of Russian tanks, support vehicles and artillery travelling along paved roads and dirt tracks. Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, said his forces had liberated more than 30 settlements in the Kharkiv region and that fighting continued in the eastern Donbas and the south.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The European Commission has urged EU states to reassess the terms on which they grant visas to Russian travellers and to root out applicants that pose a security threat. "We should not be naive, Putin's aim is to destroy the EU and he would like to attack us where we are weakest," the EU home affairs commissioner, Ylva Johansson, said on Friday. • The general staff of the Ukrainian armed forces said on Friday that it had pushed back against Russian attacks near 10 settlements, the Kyiv Independent reported. The staff said Russian forces had launched more than 12 missiles and more than 12 airstrikes on Ukrainian territory in the past 24 hours. • Shelling has destroyed power infrastructure at Enerhodar, the Ukrainian city where staff operating the Russian-held Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant live. The shelling posed a growing threat to the plant, the UN nuclear watchdog said on Friday. • The UN nuclear watchdog said conditions at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant were increasingly precarious and that a safety zone around it needed to be immediately established to prevent a nuclear accident. The International Atomic Energy Agency director, Rafael Mariano Grossi, said on Friday that there was minimal chance of re-establishing reliable offsite power lines to the plant and that its Ukrainian operator was considering shutting down the only remaining operating reactor. • EU finance ministers supported a €5bn (\$5bn) loan for Ukraine to help maintain the country's schools, hospitals and other needed operations amid Russia's invasion. The loan, agreed on Friday, will be backed by guarantees of EU member states and is part of an overall €9bn package announced in May. • The EU executive have pledged to devise unprecedented measures in the coming days to address an energy price shock as a result of Russia's war on Ukraine, including a controversial gas price cap that could further anger the Kremlin. European energy ministers tasked the European Commission with working through this weekend to draw up legal texts that will include emergency funding for consumers struggling to afford soaring bills. • A Russian-appointed official in Ukraine's Kharkiv region announced on Friday that civilians were being evacuated from three of the region's Russian-controlled territories that have come under threat from the Ukrainian counter-offensive.
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HEADLINE	09/10 Pakistan 'unimaginable' damage flood areas
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/10/un-secretary-general-antonio-guterres-pakistan-floods-visit
GIST	<p>The United Nations secretary general, António Guterres, has visited several areas of Pakistan ravaged by floods, as he rounded off a two-day trip aimed at raising awareness of the disaster.</p> <p>Record monsoon rains and glacier melt in the country's northern mountains have triggered floods that have killed at least 1,391 people, sweeping away houses, roads, railway tracks, bridges, livestock and crops.</p> <p>Huge areas are inundated, and hundreds of thousands of people have been forced from their homes. The government says the lives of nearly 33 million people have been disrupted. Pakistan estimates the damage at \$30bn (£26bn), and both the government and Guterres have blamed the flooding on climate breakdown.</p> <p>The UN secretary general landed in Sindh province on Saturday, before flying over some of the worst-affected areas en route to Balochistan, another badly hit province.</p> <p>"It is difficult not to feel deeply moved to hear such detailed descriptions of tragedy," Guterres said, after landing in Sindh, according to a video released by the office of the prime minister, Shehbaz Sharif.</p> <p>"Pakistan needs massive financial support. This is not a matter of generosity; it is a matter of justice."</p>

	<p>A video released by the information minister, Marriyum Aurangzeb, showed Guterres seated next to Sharif as they viewed flood-damaged areas from an aircraft window. “Unimaginable,” Guterres said, surveying the damage.</p> <p>In July and August, Pakistan had 391mm (15.4in) of rain, or nearly 190% more than the 30-year average. Sindh province, in the country’s south, has seen 466% more rain than average.</p> <p>Guterres said on Saturday that the world needed to understand the impact of climate breakdown on low-income countries.</p> <p>“Humanity has been waging war on nature and nature strikes back,” he said.</p> <p>“Nature strikes back in Sindh, but it was not Sindh that has made the emissions of greenhouse gases that have accelerated climate change so dramatically. There is a very unfair situation relative to the level of destruction.”</p>
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HEADLINE	09/09 Ukraine nuclear plant operates tenuously
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/sep/9/ukrainian-nuke-plant-operating-tenuously-as-war-pe/
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine’s state nuclear energy operator said Friday that Europe’s largest nuclear power plant, caught in the Ukraine-Russia war, is operating in emergency mode with elevated risk.</p> <p>The six-reactor Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant came under the control of Russian forces early in the war that started in February, but is being operated by Ukrainian staff. The plant and surrounding areas have been repeatedly hit by shelling that Russia and Ukraine blame on each other’s forces.</p> <p>The last power line connecting the plant to the Ukrainian electricity grid was cut on Monday, leaving the plant without an outside source of electricity and receiving power for its own safety systems from the only one of the six reactors that remains operational.</p> <p>Energoatom, the state nuclear operator, said Friday that repairs to the outside lines are impossible because of the shelling and that operating in the so-called “island” carries “the risk of violating radiation and fire safety standards.”</p> <p>“Only the withdrawal of the Russians from the plant and the creation of a security zone around it can normalize the situation at the Zaporizhzhia NPP. Only then will the world be able to exhale,” Petro Kotin, the head of Energoatom, said Friday on Ukrainian TV.</p> <p>Fighting continued Friday in parts of southern and eastern Ukraine and in the north where Ukraine claims to have recently pushed Russian forces out of some areas.</p> <p>Russian planes bombed the hospital in the town of Velika Pysarivka, on the border with Russia, said Dmytro Zhyvytskyi, governor of the Sumy region. he said the building was destroyed and there were an unknown number of casualties.</p> <p>Four people were killed in shelling in the Kharkiv region, two of them in Kharkiv city, Ukraine’s second-largest, according to regional governor Oleh Syniehubov. Ukraine this week claimed to have regained control of more than 20 settlements in the Kharkiv region, including the small city of Balakliya.</p> <p>Social media posts showed weeping and smiling Balakliya residents embracing Ukrainian soldiers.</p> <p>In the Donetsk region in the east — one of two that Russia declared to be sovereign states at the outset of the war — eight people were killed in the city of Bakhmut over the past day and the city is without water and electricity for the fourth straight day, said governor Pavlo Kyrylenko.</p>

HEADLINE	09/09 US, NATO: Ukraine gains but war drags on
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/sep/9/us-nato-note-ukraine-army-gains-but-see-war-draggi/
GIST	<p>BRUSSELS — Ukraine’s armed forces have made significant early gains in their counter-offensive against Russian troops in southern and eastern Ukraine but fighting appears set to drag on for months, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the head of NATO said Friday.</p> <p>Blinken, who was at NATO headquarters to brief the 29 U.S. allies after a trip to Kyiv on Thursday, said the six-month war in Ukraine is entering a critical period. He urged the conflict-torn country’s Western backers to maintain their support through the winter.</p> <p>“The initial signs are positive, and we see Ukraine making real, demonstrable progress in a deliberate way,” Blinken said, referring to the Ukrainian military’s recent push into Russian-occupied areas in southern Ukraine and the eastern Donbas region.</p> <p>“But this is likely to go on for some significant period of time,” he said. “There are a huge number of Russian forces that are in Ukraine, and unfortunately, tragically, horrifically, President (Vladimir) Putin has demonstrated that he will throw a lot of people into this at huge cost to Russia.”</p> <p>NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said the invasion launched by Putin in February is “entering a critical phase.”</p> <p>“Ukrainian forces have been able to stall Moscow’s offensive in Donbas, strike back behind Russian lines and retake territory,” he said.</p> <p>But Stoltenberg warned that allied unity will be tested in coming months, “with pressure on energy supplies and the soaring cost of living caused by Russia’s war.” He renewed calls for allies to supply special uniforms, generators, tents and equipment to help Ukraine’s army weather the winter.</p> <p>Blinken appeared moved by his visit to Ukraine as he railed against what he said were Russian war crimes and the price of “indiscriminate violence” inflicted on civilians.</p> <p>“I saw the costs in my visit to a children’s hospital in Kyiv, where I met kids who will spend the rest of their lives without limbs, or with enduring brain injuries, or with other trauma that may be invisible to the eye, because of atrocities committed by Russian forces,” he said.</p> <p>The one-day visit was Blinken’s second to Ukraine’s capital since the war began, and his fifth into Ukraine since becoming secretary of state. On his last trip, in April, he traveled on the same overnight train with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin but did not have the opportunity to see much of the damage in and around the city caused by Russian shelling.</p> <p>At the hospital, Blinken met with, among other children wounded in aerial and artillery attacks, a six-year old girl named Maryna who lost a leg after a rocket struck her house in the city of Kherson. He also toured the town of Irpin, much of it devastated by repeated Russian air strikes.</p> <p>“You see just miles from downtown Kyiv these bombed-out buildings, civilian dwellings,” he said after his return. “The only thing you can say when you see it is, at best – at best, these were indiscriminate attacks on civilian buildings, and at worst, intentional, deliberate, designed to terrorize the population.”</p> <p>“There has to be accountability for those who committed atrocities,” Blinken said.</p> <p>At NATO on Friday, Blinken said Putin is using every weapon he has, including energy, to try to “break the will” of the allies, but that there is “a growing recognition around the world that while the costs of standing up to the Kremlin’s aggression are high, the costs of standing down would be even higher.”</p>

HEADLINE	09/09 Private booms: parents exit public schools
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/sep/9/private-schools-homeschoolers-booming-parents-exit/
GIST	<p>Eleanor Jones started homeschooling her learning-disabled son in the fall of 2020 when Maryland's public schools were virtual — and she's had no desire to send him back since they've reopened.</p> <p>Now 10, her son was born with severe hearing loss due to a congenital inner ear anomaly. He wears cochlear implants to hear, suffers from a processing disorder and reads lips to understand others at his home in Westminster, 36 miles northwest of Baltimore.</p> <p>“He didn't handle masks well,” Ms. Jones said Friday. “We decided to continue homeschooling this year as things still don't seem to be completely settled regarding COVID mandates, particularly in school settings.”</p> <p>Ms. Jones is among the millions of parents who pulled their kids out of K-12 public schools to avoid hybrid learning and mask mandates during the pandemic. And their number is growing even as the pandemic fades.</p> <p>Discontent with the state of public education is sparking an enrollment boom in homeschooling groups and private schools, even as falling birth rates drive public school enrollment down.</p> <p>The Oregon Department of Education reports public school enrollment dropped from 582,661 in 2019-2020 to 550,020 in April — and it's on track to drop again this month.</p> <p>“I think parents have realized the public education system does not fit many children's needs,” said MacKensey Pulliam, president of the school choice advocacy group Oregon Moms Union.</p> <p>In Washington state, homeschooling groups are seeing record growth as public schools project years of decline.</p> <p>According to the Seattle Public Schools, enrollment in the citywide district has fallen yearly from 53,630 students in 2019-2020 to a projected 49,550 this year. The district projects enrollment will keep declining steadily to 46,910 students in the 2025-2026 school year.</p> <p>Statewide, the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction reports the number of homeschooling students swelled from 20,844 children in October 2019 to 32,056 in October 2021.</p> <p>The Washington Homeschool Organization, a volunteer group of parents, says the actual number is likely higher.</p> <p>“There are many families in Washington engaging in non-legal ‘pod schools’ and ‘micro-schools,’” said Jen Garrison Stuber, the organization's advocacy chair.</p> <p>As K-12 students return to class this month, Catholic schools are also seeing record growth.</p> <p>The National Catholic Educational Association says enrollment in U.S. Catholic schools increased by 62,000 in 2020-21 to about 1.68 million students last year. It was their first annual increase in two decades and the biggest in 50 years of recorded data.</p> <p>In Florida, the Diocese of Venice reports Catholic school enrollment has jumped by 26%, from 4,400 students in 2020-2021 to 5,900 students this month. The diocese operates 15 schools in five southwest Florida counties.</p>

“For the last two years, we were open and in-person, never closing a school or a classroom. Families have also responded to our rigorous curriculum and faith-based education,” said the Rev. John Belmonte, the diocese’s superintendent of Catholic schools.

Last year, school tracking website Burbio reported the steepest decline occurred in New York, where enrollment fell by more than 48,000 students from 2020-2021.

Experts say many parents relocated from large urban centers like New York City to lockdown-light Florida during the pandemic — and they’re not moving back.

“Some of the decline, particularly in large cities, was probably related to parents seeking better options during the years of COVID school closures,” said Ray Domanico, former director of education research at New York City’s Independent Budget Office and current senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute. “Some changed states, others switched to charter or private schools.”

As they reopen this month, public schools are also grappling with a youth mental-health crisis, a national teacher shortage, a parental backlash against “woke” curriculum and fears of mass shootings.

In an annual poll released earlier this month, Gallup found that 42% of U.S. adults say they are satisfied with the quality of the nation’s K-12 education, a two-decade low and the second-lowest reading in 23 years. A near-record high of 51% expressed satisfaction in August 2019, before the pandemic.

As discontent with public education grows, enrollment is falling hardest among K-3 students.

In July, the D.C. Policy Center reported that enrollment growth in Washington, D.C. public schools and public charter schools had “stagnated” in general and “even declined” among lower grades after years of steady increases.

In a statement emailed to The Washington Times, a spokesperson for the National Education Association cited the nation’s shrinking population of young people as a factor in the decline.

According to the latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. birthrate has declined steadily since 2008 and dropped faster during COVID before rebounding slightly in March 2021.

“The consistently shrinking U.S. birth and immigration rates over the last decade are critical and persistent factors affecting school enrollment,” the NEA said.

Burbio reports public school enrollment is falling steadily in cities like Los Angeles that have seen declining numbers of young people — but the website says it’s also falling in wealthy and growing areas like Virginia’s Fairfax County Schools.

“These are school districts that remained closed much longer than most other systems,” said Meg Kilgannon, senior fellow for education studies at the conservative Family Research Council. “No surprise, then, that parents vote with their feet and leave the system when pleading with school boards to reopen schools in these locations didn’t work.”

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HEADLINE	09/10 Nuclear town grapples: remember the bomb
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/10/us/richland-nagasaki-atomic-bomb-mushroom-cloud.html
GIST	<p>RICHLAND, Wash. — In the arid shrublands of southeastern Washington state, a small agricultural outpost underwent a covert transformation during World War II. Thousands of workers converged next to the Columbia River, rushing to produce the material needed for the ultimate weapon.</p> <p>These days, decades after a nuclear bomb destroyed Nagasaki, Japan, the engineers and scientists who enriched the radioactive material for it have a legacy. Diners at a brewpub in this company town can wash</p>

down a Reactor Core pizza with a Plutonium Porter. Nearby, when I visited recently, teenagers were mingling at the Atomic Bowl bowling alley. Across the way sits Richland High School, home of the Bombers, where flags, walls and the school basketball court feature a mushroom cloud.

“Proud of the cloud,” many students declare.

That boisterous civic pride has at times become a point of contention between those who see the city’s history-making heritage as one deserving of overt celebration and those who find the current motifs far too cavalier for commemorating an event that killed tens of thousands of people. Those conversations have resurfaced as communities around the nation consider how best to show history without alienating residents and visitors who do not view the past with the same reverence.

Last month, down the street from the high school, I went to a ceremony for the 77th anniversary of the bombing at Nagasaki. There, Adrienne Fletcher stood to tell her family’s story: Her grandmother was at a boarding school just outside Nagasaki when the bombing occurred, and she saw the mushroom cloud from her classroom window.

Ms. Fletcher, now a resident of Richland, said that her grandmother survived but has dealt with lifelong health issues.

“Tonight, I ask you to remember the humans — the humans — who have lost their lives or have suffered through daily, excruciating pain from radiation exposure,” she told attendees, some of whom worked in the region’s nuclear industry. “I ask you to remember the children taken away from their parents. I ask you to remember the families torn away from their homes. I ask, as you move through this community with its numerous reminders of radioactive destruction, that you take time to reflect — that you reflect on the consequences of war and violence, that you reflect on the impact that these daily reminders of this violence mean to an entire group of people, and how it affects them.”

Before the Manhattan Project, the secret U.S. plan that produced the first nuclear weapons, Richland was a village of about 250 people who had settled to farm next to the Columbia River. But the federal government swooped in to acquire the land, ousting residents from homes and farms in the area in order to use the remote location to build nuclear reactors and hundreds of associated buildings at what is now known as the Hanford Site, along with neighborhoods in Richland to house the many workers. The town soon had 11,000 people.

By 1945, the United States and its allies were preparing for a grueling invasion of Japan that was expected to lead to mass casualties on both sides of the conflict. But with the Manhattan Project demonstrating success, President Harry Truman instead chose to deploy the nation’s new nuclear weapon.

The bombs dropped on Hiroshima (with uranium enriched in Oak Ridge, Tenn.) and Nagasaki in August that year killed an estimated 200,000 people, many instantly and many others from radiation exposure in the days and decades that followed. Soon after the Nagasaki bombing, and with the Soviet Union also declaring war on Japan, the Japanese government said it would surrender.

While the making of the bomb is central to how Richland came to be, it is also at the heart of how today’s community was shaped. (The population is now roughly 60,000.) The Hanford project that enriched the plutonium was also critical during the Cold War era before ceasing production at the end of the 1980s. The site remains a major employer but is now focused on a huge decommission and decontamination effort.

Del Ballard, 92, a longtime Hanford worker who began at the site in 1951, said the employees had a lot of patriotic pride about their technological accomplishments and role in supporting national security. And as the U.S. government moved to decommission the Hanford buildings, Mr. Ballard helped lead efforts to preserve the reactor that produced the Nagasaki plutonium. Today, people can tour the reactor site.

“It was so important to the nation and the world’s history,” he said. “It was the start of the nuclear age and it was the end of World War II.”

In 1945, as the war was concluding, students at the local high school changed their name from the Beavers to the Bombers. Later, the mushroom cloud logo arrived, with many recent classes proudly adding versions of the logo around campus, even as some students challenged whether the symbol was appropriate.

Parjot Pawar, who recently graduated as Richland High's salutatorian, said she had never liked the mushroom cloud logo or the "proud of the cloud" phrase. Last year, she said the school's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee held a meeting with the school's principal, pressing to replace the school's logo. But many people remained proud of the symbol and its representation of the city's heritage.

"However, I have noticed that as the years go by and discussions on monuments and statues become more popular, there is more and more support for a change in this school's image," Ms. Pawar said.

Ms. Fletcher said she had first had a jarring encounter with Richland's pride when she arrived in town and went to the high school to audition for a job with the local symphony, which was founded in 1945, largely by Hanford workers. The school's "Bombers" name was emblazoned on a building.

At the recent "Lights for Peace" program commemorating the anniversary, Ms. Fletcher's choir group, the Mid-Columbia Mastersingers, performed a Japanese children's song. Then an event organizer with the National Park Service invited people to ring a bell and walk a path lined by illuminated paper bags that featured messages of peace and remembrance.

As people circled the park and rang the bell, Ms. Fletcher said in an interview that the community in many ways had been disconnected from another side of this history: the bomb's impact. But as the nation has had more conversations in recent years about how to view its past, she has found people in Richland also more willing to hear her family's story, more willing to hear why the city's atomic-themed emblems prompt her to think about death and suffering.

She also learned that some of the students in her youth symphony had been advocating change at the high school.

"I think this is just the beginning of the process," she said. "There is quite a ways to go. It's such a big part of this community and has been for so long. I think there are many more conversations yet to be had."

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HEADLINE	09/09 New York declares polio state of emergency
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/09/nyregion/new-york-polio-state-of-emergency.html
GIST	<p>Gov. Kathy Hochul of New York declared a state of emergency on Friday over the growing polio outbreak, in an effort to better equip health care providers with tools to curb the spread of the sometimes disabling virus before it takes further hold in the state.</p> <p>The order allows emergency service workers, midwives and pharmacists to administer the polio vaccine. The declaration also requires health care providers to send polio immunization data to New York health officials so that they can determine where in the state to target vaccination efforts.</p> <p>"On polio, we simply cannot roll the dice," Dr. Mary T. Bassett, the state health commissioner, said in a statement on Friday. "Do not wait to vaccinate."</p> <p>The first polio case in nearly a decade was identified in July in New York State. Officials said an unvaccinated man in Rockland County was infected by virus that had been shed from someone who received the oral polio vaccine, which has not been administered in the United States since 2000. The oral vaccine is safe, but contains small amounts of weakened live virus that can circulate and strengthen if communities are undervaccinated.</p>

No other cases have been identified by the state, but officials have been monitoring wastewater for polio — which is typically found in the fecal matter of an infected person — to track whether the virus is spreading.

In August, New York City officials said they had [identified polio](#) in the city's wastewater. On Friday, state health officials announced that they had identified polio in 57 samples collected from wastewater in several downstate counties between May and August. The majority of the samples were collected in Rockland County, and 50 of them were genetically linked to the case of the Rockland resident.

Thirteen of the wastewater samples were collected in Orange County, six were collected in Sullivan County and one was collected in Nassau County.

State health officials have marked seven of the samples containing polio as a particular concern because they have not been linked to the Rockland County case.

The polio vaccination rates in counties where the samples were collected are lower than those in the rest of the state, according to state data published in August. The statewide average rate for polio vaccination among children under 2 years old is around 79 percent. The rate in Rockland County was around 60 percent. The rate in Orange County was around 59 percent. And the rate in Sullivan County was around 62 percent.

In New York City and Nassau County, the rates of vaccination are higher. In Nassau, the polio vaccination rate for children under the age of 2 is around 79 percent. In New York City, around 86 percent of children who are 5 and under are vaccinated.

Rates of vaccination vary widely among ZIP codes, however, according to [state](#) and [city](#) data. Orange and Rockland Counties are both home to large numbers of Hasidic Jewish residents, and [anti-vaccine sentiment has spread](#) among some in that community. But [other communities](#) also have low vaccination rates because of a variety of factors.

Officials said they wanted to see the polio vaccination rate rise above 90 percent. State data counts children who have received three polio immunizations before their second birthday as vaccinated.

Polio can cause mild or flulike symptoms, but the disease can also [be disabling and life-threatening](#). It mainly affects infants and children under 5, but anyone who is unvaccinated can contract it. Polio is contagious and spreads from person to person, typically through [contact with the fecal matter of someone who is infected](#). There is no cure for polio but widespread vaccination has proved effective.

Ms. Hochul's declaration came as many New York students began their [first week of school](#), and as some parents continue to worry about the spread not only of polio but also the monkeypox virus. However, the risk of a polio infection is low for most students in New York City, and attending school is also [unlikely to expose students](#) to monkeypox.

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HEADLINE	09/09 Traveling in fall? Cheaper prices and chaos
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/09/09/travel/fall-travel-plans.html
GIST	<p>Flying has been maddeningly unpredictable. Airline and hotel prices remain high. And inflation has forced many people to cut back on appliances and new clothes. Delayed vacations, conventions and weddings have led to booked resorts and hotels, creating a sort of seasonal drift that has forced travelers to pay summer prices for fall trips.</p> <p>Still, more than 60 percent of Americans said they plan to travel this fall, compared with 54 percent of respondents last year, according to TripAdvisor, the travel site, which surveyed 2,700 would-be travelers across six countries about their plans this season.</p>

And 66 percent of those respondents said that they planned to spend more money traveling this fall than they did last year, said Brian Hoyt, a spokesman for TripAdvisor. “Travel is not going to be one of those things that they pull back on,” Mr. Hoyt said. “They’re still going to travel even knowing that they’re going to spend more than the year before.”

Some are willing to splurge on flights to Italy and Turks and Caicos and [excursions like ATV tours of the Mojave Desert in Nevada](#). Others are paying [to clean up beaches in Barcelona](#) or [help restore coral reefs in the Caribbean](#), vacations crafted as “nature positive tourism.”

How much will you spend if you travel this fall? It depends. Cruise deals are still plentiful, but hotel prices are stubbornly expensive. Airline tickets, while cheaper than this summer, are still higher than they were before the pandemic.

And don’t expect the cancellations and delays that infuriated travelers in recent months to stop anytime soon. “While things have improved since early summer, airline cancellations are still going to be a factor for fall travel,” said Eric Jones, co-founder of [The Vacationer](#), an online travel guide.

What else can you expect this fall?

Airlines: Better, but by how much?

Cancellations. Lost luggage. Flight delays and endless waits for customer service. Even the official in charge of regulating civilian aviation in the United States hasn’t avoided the chaos. “Airlines need to step up their game,” said Pete Buttigieg, the U.S. transportation secretary, who faced multiple cancellations and delays this summer. Still, he’s optimistic that flying will improve this fall. “I do think that a better situation is within reach,” he said.

Airline executives, labor unions and industry analysts agree: Fall travel should be better than summer travel. They do not agree on how much better. But most concur that the issues that must be addressed, include: not enough staff, too many cancellations and delays, problems with refunds and terrible customer service.

On the question of whether airlines have enough staff, Airlines for America, a trade organization representing seven major U.S. carriers, says yes, they do. “This summer, carriers have proactively adjusted their staffing models to ensure they are adequately staffed for each flight,” a spokeswoman wrote in an email.

Union leaders agree that staffing is adequate, but only on “blue sky days,” the term Gary Peterson, the international vice president of the Transport Workers Union of America, which represents more than 70,000 airline workers, uses for those 24-hour periods when nature works in airlines’ favor. “But when weather hits, they don’t have enough reserves,” he said.

“I believe airlines have taken steps to make things better, but it’s fragile,” said Sara Nelson, the international president of the Association of Flight Attendants-C. W. A., the largest flight attendants’ union. Even before the pandemic, staffing for roles ranging from pilot to wheelchair handler was stretched thin, she said. In order to minimize the ripple effect when something goes wrong, it’s critical to maintain staffing above the Federal Aviation Administration minimum, she added, something that has not happened for years.

A second concern: Have airlines stopped selling more flights than they can handle? Or will they continue with the pandemic trend of canceling flights that they should have never scheduled? Several analysts were optimistic that the airlines had learned from their mistakes. American Airlines, for example, recently slashed 16 percent of its November flights, according to Cirium, a travel analytics company. John Grant, a senior analyst for OAG, a travel data company, noted that cancellation rates were far lower in July and August than earlier in the year. Still, the delay rate has recently hovered around 23 percent, higher than prepandemic times or last summer, according to FlightAware, a flight-tracking company.

The third issue: Will the refund, flight change and hotel voucher process get easier? Mr. Buttigieg is pushing forward several initiatives. One involves [updating a federal policy](#) guiding flight refunds.

Under [the current](#) policy, airlines are supposed to reimburse passengers for flights that have been canceled or “significantly changed.” But carriers have long [exploited](#) ambiguity around the term. The proposal, which he will revisit in November, codifies the conditions under which refunds must be paid.

Last week, the Department of Transportation [launched a dashboard](#) that Mr. Buttigieg called “a tool for transparency,” outlining the services that each airline has committed to provide when flights are altered for reasons within their control.

Some analysts said that these measures are weak, particularly in contrast with Europe, where airlines must pay travelers — on top of refunds — for certain types of cancellations. Recently, more than 30 state attorneys general [blasted](#) the Department of Transportation for failing to keep up with “escalating issues” and argued that they should take over enforcement of consumer protection laws affecting travelers. Some lawmakers have also suggested that airlines should be fined for treating passengers poorly, given the billions of dollars in government pandemic aid they’ve received.

Finally, there is the matter of customer service: Will Thanksgiving week be filled with nightmarish stories of unanswered calls to alter a flight or locate a lost bag? On this front, labor representatives and industry analysts agree: It’s unlikely to get better soon. Airlines see customer service as an area to slash, not grow, costs.

Prices: Cheaper, just not prepandemic cheap

Excepting foliage destinations and convention cities, fall has historically been a value-seeker’s season. Across the industry, many prices this year will follow the same pattern. But inflation and other pandemic-related effects mean some deals are weaker.

Consider airfare. The typical seasonal decline between summer and fall fares, according to the booking app [Hopper](#), is 10 to 15 percent. This year it is 37 percent, falling to \$238 for an average domestic round-trip ticket. But that doesn’t mean fares are cheaper, only that the difference between summer and fall fares is much greater.

“Fall 2022 looks very different, and the main reason is how high airfare got this summer,” said Hayley Berg, the lead economist at Hopper, noting that summer airfares were more than double 2019 rates.

Airlines are also maintaining capacity cuts this fall to control costs, according to Helane Becker, a research analyst with the investment banking firm Cowen. “The lowest fares I’ve seen for fall are \$59 one way and there are only a few seats available at that rate, up from \$39 or \$49 in the past,” Ms. Becker said.

On the hotel front, travelers should expect to pay close to prepandemic rates this fall. The steady rebound of business travel is bolstering big cities and may diminish fall deals in urban areas. In the latest figures available, average daily rates nationally have climbed year-to-date to roughly \$147 in July, compared with \$132 in July 2019, or nearly equal to prepandemic prices when adjusted for inflation, according to the hotel benchmarking firm STR. The firm is forecasting a continued recovery for hotels, with occupancy up five points this year over last.

Popular resort destinations may be more expensive, too. Most of October remains high season at the [Camden Harbour Inn](#) in coastal Camden, Maine. But its hefty rate hike this year of more than 20 percent to an average of \$688 a night in part reflects higher wages, Covid absences, and increased expenses for everything from electricity to linens.

Don’t expect any steals in vacation rentals either. [AirDNA](#), which analyzes the short-term rental market, has average fall rates outpacing fall 2021. The average October rental domestically was recently about \$258 a night compared with \$243 in 2021 and \$195 in 2019.

Rental car rates, however, will be better, but still much higher than they were before the pandemic. This fall, average rentals are 18 percent cheaper than in summer, according to [Autoslash](#), a free service that monitors car rental bookings and flags them for rebooking when rates drop. But prices are still 52 percent higher for the period over 2019, thanks to fleet downsizing.

“We don’t expect rental rates to come back down to 2019 levels anytime soon, if ever,” said Jonathan Weinberg, the founder of Autoslash.

Still, fall remains a good time to ride the value of a [strong dollar](#), trading now at parity with the euro. Among new international low-cost carriers, [Norse Atlantic Airways](#) recently started service from New York’s Kennedy International Airport to Berlin starting at \$132 one way.

Generally speaking, if you don’t like rates now, don’t expect them to improve. Pandemic uncertainty — including concerns over new variants and trip cancellations — have abbreviated booking windows to often just a few weeks out, meaning rates could rise dramatically in the coming month.

Environment: ‘Nature-positive tourism’

The popularity of ecotourism has hardly waned since the term rose to prominence a generation ago. But a new framing has emerged that puts a bigger onus on the travel industry to examine its complicated relationship with the natural world. Say hello to “nature positive tourism.”

The idea is “a long overdue reinvention of ecotourism,” said Justin Francis, who advises the British government on nature and business and serves as chief executive of [Responsible Travel](#), a travel company based in Britain.

“Ecotourism was about ‘take only photos, leave only footprints’ — it was basically ‘leave no trace,’” said Mr. Francis, adding that the concept applied only to nature-based tourism, not to things like city breaks or cruises.

“But when we look at the problems that we as an industry create for nature, we realize that they come from all types of tourism,” he said. “It’s not just a question of a few ecolodges getting a bit more ambitious. If we’re to be nature positive, then every part of the tourism industry needs to step up.”

Scientists warn that we are in the middle of a mass extinction event. Between 1970 and 2016, the planet lost [nearly 70 percent](#) of its populations of wild mammals, fish, birds, reptiles and amphibians. Today, roughly one million species [are threatened with extinction](#).

Tourism contributes to all the major drivers of species loss: Developers fill in marshlands to build resorts (land use change); tourists trample fragile coral reefs (overuse); cruise ships dump waste (pollution); visitors inadvertently carry the seeds of nonnative plants into nature reserves (invasive species); and flying emits greenhouse gasses (climate change).

Mr. Francis said that travel companies must understand their negative impacts. But, he added, travel — perhaps more than other sectors of the economy — can do a huge amount to support nature.

Jim Sano, vice president for travel, tourism and conservation at World Wildlife Fund, noted that tourism is the biggest market-based [source of funding](#) for protected areas around the world. He described projects in Mexico, Nepal and Namibia in which WWF has worked with travel industry partners to craft tourist experiences that support wildlife protection while also generating income for residents. “It’s creating a situation where wildlife is more valuable alive than dead,” he said.

So far, [more than two dozen travel companies](#) — including Exodus Travels, Journeys With Purpose and the Adventure People, as well as the airline Virgin Atlantic — have signed a “nature positive pledge” as part of the Get Nature Positive campaign, which Mr. Francis coleads as part of his work with the British government.

Several companies offer experiences that allow guests to enjoy nature while also protecting it. [Rewilding Europe Travel](#) offers wolf-tracking tours in Italy, [bison-trekking trips in Romania](#) and other experiences that support the “rewilding” of European landscapes. Responsible Travel, Mr. Francis’s company, sells trips that allow guests to [support sea turtle conservation](#) in Greece or [spearfish nonnative fish](#) off the coast of Belize.

Shorter experiences are also an option. Barcelona-based [Authenticitys](#), which has signed the “nature positive pledge,” offers one- to three-hour “social impact experiences” in 40 cities in Europe and Latin America. They classify about two dozen of those activities as “nature positive.”

Elena Rodríguez Blanco, the founder of the company, said they initially wondered if people would pay to [pick up trash](#) on the beach in Barcelona (as part of a stand-up paddle boarding lesson), or to [clean up a canal](#) in Amsterdam (while taking a boat tour). But many guests have enjoyed their experiences so much that they have recommended similar activities that the company could offer in their own hometowns.

“That’s actually been a big part of our growth,” Ms. Rodríguez Blanco said. “It’s really rewarding.”

Points: More deals, more people chasing them

After a frustrating summer, travelers trying to use mileage rewards this fall may find that their points go a long way — literally. Kyle Potter, the editor at [Thrifty Traveler](#), a travel news website, said that when cash prices go up, it’s harder to use points or miles, as they’re either more expensive or less available. The inverse, he said, is also true: When flight prices decrease, as the travel booking platform [Hopper predicts will happen](#) to domestic flights this fall, it’s easier to use points.

“The summer was really tough, whether you were paying exorbitant cash prices or trying to put some points and miles to use and getting a whole lot of errors and empty dates,” Mr. Potter said.

But snagging deals may be more difficult as demand increases. According to a recent survey from [Forbes Advisor](#), more than a quarter of Americans said they expected to pay for at least one trip using credit card rewards this year. And there’s clearly pent-up demand to spend points earned — and saved — during the pandemic. A spring 2021 survey from the personal finance site [NerdWallet](#) found that travel rewards credit-card holders had an average of nearly 65,000 points and miles banked.

Before booking a points redemption, you have to know when and where to look. Several airlines, like JetBlue Airways, typically offer flash sales in the fall, to entice travelers in a traditionally quieter season. While the cash deals are often tempting, the sales usually extend to reservations made with points, including on international flights.

A one-way flight from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., to Guayaquil, Ecuador, for instance, was priced at \$100 or 4,600 TrueBlue points during the sale. TrueBlue is a revenue-based program, meaning the cost of award tickets is determined by the cash price of a ticket. After the sale, the price for that same route was \$448, or 40,800 points.

Other carriers, such as [Delta Air Lines](#) and [Southwest Airlines](#), regularly offer deals on short- and medium-haul flights. Delta’s SkyMiles are considered among the easiest to earn from its co-branded credit cards, ride-share apps, transfer partners and flights. Travelers looking for cheap, last-minute deals can find flights from New York to New Orleans, for instance, for as low as 11,000 miles round-trip.

But keep in mind that deals often come with restrictions like limited dates for your travel and what fare class you’ll be in (usually the lowest). For the New York to New Orleans flight, the low cost means you’ll get no miles for the trip or credit toward elite status, seats assigned after check-in and boarding last. A full-fare seat on the same flight costs 5,000 more miles.

To quickly find the best deals, travelers should look to fly from and arrive at a destination predominantly served by their preferred airline.

If United Airlines is your first choice, you may want to pick a United hub as your fall travel destination, such as Newark, Chicago, Washington-Dulles or San Francisco. Travelers can book award flights on partner airlines, too. In United's case, travelers can book award tickets on Star Alliance carriers like Turkish Airlines or Lufthansa, which offers nonstop flights between the United States and Germany.

Using Air Canada's Aeroplan program is one of the easiest ways to book flights on United Airlines, thanks to the Canadian carrier's [distance-based award chart](#), meaning that the number of points required to book an award is based on the distance between the origin and destination airport. Using British Airways' Avios mileage program is one of the cheapest ways to fly short-haul domestic flights on American Airlines across the United States.

Mr. Potter recommends that travelers not tie their loyalty to an airline but to transferable points programs from credit card issuers. American Express Membership Rewards points can become, for instance, Marriott Bonvoy points, while Chase points can turn into Southwest points.

Travelers thinking ahead to winter 2022 and spring 2023 trips should start planning now, he said. "Now is this time to start coming up with a plan for how you want to get there," Mr. Potter said, referring to travel destinations, "what points and miles you need to make that a possibility and start looking for those flights because they're going to go fast."

Destinations: 'What's old is new again'

Cities remain a go-to. So do tropical places like the Caribbean and Cancun.

In 2020, travelers avoided urban centers for beach towns and national parks, where it felt like a safer place to go, said Brian Hoyt of TripAdvisor.

But by last fall, Las Vegas, New York City, and Orlando had supplanted places like Key Largo, Key West and Atlantic City, [which were the top three destinations for travelers in fall 2020](#), according to TripAdvisor.

The trend is continuing: Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Denver, Orlando and New York are the five most booked destinations in the United States for fall, according to Hopper, [a travel booking site](#). For international travelers, cities like San Juan, Puerto Rico; Cancun; Mexico City; Barcelona; and Rome are in the top 10, according to Hopper.

"What's old is new again," Mr. Hoyt said. "High-density population centers are back in vogue."

But lower-key vacations are still a draw. Ocean City, N.J., a beach town of about 11 miles south of Atlantic City, was the top trending U.S. destination this fall based on the number of nights booked, [according to Airbnb](#). That's part of a growing trend to extend summer. There has been a surge of interest from visitors who flock to the eight miles of beach in September and October, when the summer crowds leave and the town hosts events like [an antique car show](#) and [a huge block party and fireworks show](#), said Michele Gillian, executive director of the Ocean City Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Travelers remain eager to go to Europe, where demand for flights and hotel bookings is "on par" with 2019, said Kareem George, a travel adviser and the owner of [Culture Traveler, a firm specializing in luxury trips](#).

"Italy is the standout," Mr. George said, "which is not a surprise because Italy always is the standout." London, Paris, Munich, Copenhagen and Dublin were the top cities searched by people looking to travel between Sept. 6 and Nov. 15, according to Expedia.

The Amalfi coast in southern Italy and Santorini, a whitewashed Greek island in the Aegean Sea, are so popular this fall that travelers are struggling to find accommodations, said Charles Neville, a spokesman for [Jayway](#), a boutique travel agency that specializes in European travel.

People are so eager to tour these destinations they are willing to spend \$600 to \$700 a night for accommodations that may not justify that amount, he said.

Mr. Neville said he is encouraging clients to book later in the fall when the weather is still pleasant and the crowds have abated, or to consider Sicily, Croatia and lesser known islands in Greece like Paros and Naxos. “Maybe that’s a way to have your Greek island vacation dreams come true without spending stupid amounts of money,” he said.

In the Americas, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Colombia and Costa Rica are seeing more passengers book trips than they did in 2019, said Scott Keyes, founder of [Scott’s Cheap Flights](#). The countries are easy to get to and airline tickets are generally cheap — round-trip fare from nearly anywhere in the United States to Colombia was selling for about \$260 in August, he said.

“For a lot of folks, the trip they want to take as their first one back is fun, overseas, but not too far away,” Mr. Keyes said.

That sort of ease is what Silvia Sims, a retired sales manager who lives in suburban Detroit, said she and her three friends wanted when they began planning their fall trip last May. They settled on Jamaica, where Ms. Sims, 71, has traveled nearly a dozen times since the early 1980s but had not visited since April 2019. “I’m going back to a place where I really love to visit and I feel safe,” she said.

Timing: ‘Seasonal drift’ takes hold

Budget travelers and the crowd-averse have long embraced the fall shoulder season, when airfares and lodging rates tended to drop and visitors could enjoy quieter hiking trails and fewer tourists around the Eiffel Tower.

But flexible work, climate change and high-season hassles have pushed more travelers into fall, effectively extending summer and narrowing the bargain window ahead of the winter holidays.

“I am managing hotels for the past 20 years and never seen such a rush on rooms,” said Henrik Muehle, the general manager of [Flemings Mayfair](#) in London, noting that rates are, in most cases, double 2019 prices. “Guests don’t seem bothered,” he added.

Lingering consequences of the pandemic have encouraged the shift. At [Little Gem Resorts](#) on Nantucket and Martha’s Vineyard, Mass., the rise of fall bookings includes a surge of postponed weddings. Social events and business gatherings have picked up at the [Inn at Perry Cabin](#) in St. Michaels, Md., where September rates remain comparable to summer, averaging \$850 to \$900 a night, and won’t fall substantially until November, when they start at \$340.

Thanks in part to flexible work policies, business has been so good at [Four Seasons Resort and Residences Jackson Hole](#), in Jackson, Wyo., that the resort will forego its traditional three-week fall closure this year, and offer cycling and wolf-watching trips in Yellowstone National Park. “Guests are aspiring to be here when the crowds aren’t,” said Cory Carlson, the regional director of marketing for the resort.

Seasonal drift depends on location. [Vrbo](#), the vacation home rental agency, said fall prices still drop as much as 25 percent compared with summer in some popular beach destinations.

In these climate-changing times, planning a trip around perfect weather seems futile. At [Remote Lands](#), which specializes in Asia, bookings in Thailand in the traditional shoulder season, August through October, are up 25 percent.

“Prepandemic, the thought of a rain shower was something that clients would avoid and would shift their desired location or dates,” said Catherine Heald, the co-founder and chief executive of Remote Lands. “Now, clients understand that with climate change there is a chance that they may have blue skies throughout the stay and are ready and willing to travel.”

Other travelers continue to prioritize space and untrammelled access to nature, readily found in fall. In southern France, [Coquillade Provence Resort & Spa](#) will stay open this year from November to January, when temperatures are often more comfortable than summer, rather than closing as usual. Management plans to offer seasonal activities like truffle hunting.

“A lot of people are trying to experience the same thing at a much lower volume and without as many people around them,” said David Arraya, the general manager of [Six Senses Ibiza](#) off the coast of Spain, where the 2021 summer peak lasted to November.

Overtourism and climate-change impacts have disrupted tourism around Yosemite National Park in Northern California. Wildfires, the need for a reservation and fewer European visitors owing, in part, to a weak euro, have depressed summer numbers this year in Mariposa County, where the park is.

“Shoulder seasons are disappearing and peak seasons are not peak any longer,” said Jonathan Farrington, the executive director of [Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau](#). “April through November is one season and December through March is shoulder season.”

He attributes the shift in part to younger people who visited the park during the pandemic and discovered its appeal in the calmer but still comfortable months, when tourism is more sustainable.

“If you have the ability to choose when to go outside of June, July and August,” Mr. Farrington added, “it’s the responsible thing to do.”

Family travel: Saving money and going somewhere ‘easy’

In early October, Jess Field, her 9-year-old daughter and husband will spend four nights in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, in a hotel with a balcony overlooking crashing waves. The luxury Hyatt hotel they booked goes for more than \$1,000 a night, but it will not cost her anything; she will pay only the taxes on the family’s flights from Houston. This is because Ms. Field has a system for covering vacation costs with hotel and airline points, which she acquires by opening new credit cards with stellar welcome bonuses.

She is just one of many parents who will turn to points this fall. Last year, concerns about Covid were the primary reason that parents opted not to travel, according to several travel advisers. Now, as [six-month-old](#) babies are getting vaccinated, [coronavirus cases are falling](#), restrictions are fading and [inflation](#) is driving up prices, money has become the main obstacle to booking trips, according to [a study of 16,000 adults by Morning Consult](#), a market research company.

Ms. Field, who teaches [a course](#) on leveraging credit card offers, has found that families are eager to find creative ways to cover costs. [A recent survey](#) by Vacasa, a vacation rental site, reinforced this observation, finding that people with children were significantly more likely to have fall travel plans than people without.

“People want to travel, but they don’t have the budget and this allows them to have the best of both worlds,” Ms. Field said. In a recent week, around 180 students signed up for her [Travel Hacking Mom](#) course. This is more than she or her co-founders could recall enrolling during such a short period throughout the course’s four-year history.

Money concerns are not the only thing that has changed. Most children must now attend in-person school. This means less flexibility for travel. And yet, several travel agents said that they have noticed the pandemic has imbued parents with more of a you-only-live-once-and-it’s-OK-to-pull-my-kid-out-of-school-for-a-vacation way of thinking.

“There’s been a shift in mind-set,” said Amie O’Shaughnessy, the founder of [Ciao Bambino!](#), a travel agency based in Sun Valley, Idaho.

As to the sorts of trips that families are planning this fall, Nadia Henry, the founder of [Travel with Sparkle](#), an agency based in West Orange, N.J., said that interest in Europe, reunions and all-inclusive resorts continues to be strong.

Ms. Field has found that many families also crave a cruise. “Parents are tired and burned out and they want to go somewhere easy,” she said. She’s also picked up on excitement about Disney’s restarting certain [fall events](#) and allowing [children to hug characters](#) once again.

Gregg Kaminsky, a co-founder of [R Family Vacations](#), based in Southampton, N.Y., observed that despite the passage of what opponents call “[Don’t Say Gay](#)” legislation in Florida, it’s still looking as if the state will be a popular fall destination for L.G.B.T.Q. families. One difference, he notes, is that some gay and trans parents seem to be more interested in group travel, something that reminds him of the 1990s when L.G.B.T.Q. people traveled in groups for safety.

Another influencing factor: Some parents are still working remotely. Among “high net-worth families” with small children, this has translated into interest in hiring a nanny who can hit the road at a moment’s notice, according to the [Nanny Authority](#), a child care provider placement agency based in New York City.

As to where families stay, the pandemic seems to have pushed many parents and grandparents toward Airbnb and VRBO, said Seth Borko, a senior research analyst at [Skift](#), a travel trade publication. Chekitan Dev, a marketing professor at Cornell University’s Nolan School of Hotel Administration, said that vacation-home competition has prompted some hotel brands, such as [Hilton](#), to finally make it easier to book connected rooms.

Cruises: More bargains and fewer Covid restrictions

Major cruise lines like [Carnival](#), [Princess Cruises](#) and [Norwegian Cruise Line](#) have dropped their vaccine requirements. As of Sept. 5, passengers leaving on Royal Caribbean International from the United States on certain cruises were allowed to provide their own Covid test results, instead of one from a health professional, [according to the company, which has also dropped its vaccine requirements](#).

[Lindblad Expeditions](#), which takes passengers to far-flung destinations like the Galápagos Islands and Antarctica, said it is keeping vaccine requirements in place but is no longer requiring booster shots.

[MSC Cruises](#), which also dropped its vaccine requirement for residents of the United States, will no longer require tests for vaccinated passengers.

The changes came soon after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention dropped [a voluntary program](#) through which cruises reported the vaccination status of passengers and crew and regular updates about case counts.

As a result of the looser restrictions, more passengers from Europe are flying into the United States to board cruises, said Rubén A. Rodríguez, president of MSC Cruises USA. “We’ve also seen more people from the U.S. branch out and book itineraries in the Mediterranean and elsewhere, now that international travel protocols are easier to manage,” he said in a statement.

It has been a boon for the cruise industry, which experienced two years of enormous losses because of the pandemic and a slow restart in June 2021.

Jeremy Clubb, founder of [Rainforest Cruises](#), which specializes in exotic riverboat and small ship cruises, said he expects the company will surpass its 2019 sales total by at least 20 percent. The winter is looking especially promising, with the number of bookings for cruises up 60 percent compared with the same time last year, he said.

“It is clear that many people are growing noticeably less fearful of Covid and are eager to get traveling again,” Mr. Clubb said in an email.

Don Zingale, 76, said he and his wife are planning a 45-day cruise on [Oceania Cruises](#) from Barcelona to Rome to Miami in October. Mr. Zingale, a retired university executive based in Point Richmond, Calif., said he was “very unhappy” to see [the company loosen restrictions around testing and vaccines](#). “Letting unvaccinated people on a ship filled with older people is not the smartest thing in the world,” he said.

Still, Mr. Zingale, who estimates that he spends 100 nights on cruises a year, said the new rules would not keep him from ships, where he often enjoys luxurious amenities for “bargain prices.” “The value outweighs the risks,” he said. “It is too fun.”

Deals are likely to abound throughout the season, said Colleen McDaniel, the editor in chief of [Cruise Critic](#), a leading cruise review site. “You can cruise the Caribbean for less than \$60 a night, or the Mexican Riviera for less than \$80 a night,” she said. Before the pandemic, bargains on trips like that would have been under \$100 a night, she said.

[The aggressive discounts began in late spring and continued into the summer](#), as late bookings and a glut of cruise ships created a situation where ships were less than 100 percent full.

Travelers should take advantage of deals to take cruises to areas they might not have considered before, like Portland and Bar Harbor, Maine, or Halifax and St. John in Canada, Ms. McDaniel said. They are destinations with great dining, beautiful vistas and scenic mountain trails that nevertheless “sort of slip under the radar,” she said.

The discounts may not last as restrictions ease and bookings increase, however, said Ms. McDaniel. “We’re seeing more and more people getting on board ships,” she said. “People are really, really excited to get back to sailing.”

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HEADLINE	09/10 Guaranteed income programs spread in US
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/10/business/economy/guaranteed-income.html
GIST	<p>Early in the pandemic, Alondra Barajas had a temporary job for the Census Bureau, doing phone work from the two-bedroom apartment she shared with her mother and four younger siblings. When that job ended in late 2020, she struggled to find employment.</p> <p>But Ms. Barajas learned from an ad on Instagram that she might qualify for an unusual form of assistance: monthly payments of \$1,000 for a year.</p> <p>Since she started receiving the funds this year — while caring for her newborn, searching for a job and looking for a new place to stay — her outlook has seemed brighter.</p> <p>“It’s helped me from hitting rock bottom,” she said.</p> <p>The payments are part of a pilot program from the city of Los Angeles, one of the nation’s largest experiments with a guaranteed income. The idea is that the best way to close the wealth gap and give people the opportunity to build a more stable life is to provide unrestricted cash payments to some of the most vulnerable Americans.</p> <p>The concept, sometimes referred to as universal basic income, has had advocates for decades. Andrew Yang made it a centerpiece of his 2020 Democratic presidential campaign. At the same time, detractors have long argued that the approach incentivizes people not to work. Still, it is gaining traction, city by city.</p> <p>More than 48 guaranteed income programs have been started in cities nationwide since 2020, according to Mayors for a Guaranteed Income, a network of leaders supporting such efforts at the local, state and federal levels. Some efforts are publicly funded, and others have nongovernmental support. Jack Dorsey, the former chief executive of Twitter, donated \$18 million to help the initiative.</p>

California has become the epicenter of the movement. The Los Angeles program, funded primarily by the city, benefits 3,200 people who have at least one child, as well as an annual income below the federal poverty level. Several cities have moved ahead with efforts using private money: Oakland pledged to give 600 low-income families \$500 for 18 months, and in San Diego, some families with young children will get \$500 a month for two years.

Last year, the state set aside \$35 million over five years for cities to carry out pilot programs, which can use different criteria, including income level, people leaving the foster care system and residence in low-income neighborhoods. An application process for municipalities to tap into those funds is underway.

Beyond California, 300 Atlanta residents who live below the federal poverty level are receiving \$500 a month for a year, and in Minneapolis, 200 residents from designated low-income neighborhoods will receive \$500 a month for two years. This fall, 260 people living in motels or emergency shelters in Denver will receive a \$6,500 payment and will get an additional \$500 a month for 11 months, with payments planned for 560 more people.

Michael Tubbs, who as mayor of Stockton, Calif., put in place one of the country's first guaranteed income programs in 2019, notes that these payments are not meant to be a sole means of income but aim to provide a buffer for people to break the cycle of poverty.

Mr. Tubbs sees the programs as crucial tools in achieving racial justice for Black people and Latinos.

"The ways in which racism and capitalism have intersected to steal wealth from some communities," he said, "creates the disparities we see today."

Damon Jones, an economics professor at the University of Chicago, who has studied such programs, noted that unrestricted cash — including stimulus payments — was used broadly by the federal government to stem the economic devastation of Covid-19.

"Policymakers were surprisingly open to this idea following the onset of the pandemic," Mr. Jones said. Now the emergency aid programs have largely lapsed, ending what for some was a lifeline.

Opponents argue that guaranteed income programs are too expensive and are counterproductive.

Oren Cass, executive director of American Compass, a conservative-leaning think tank, said the case against guaranteed income was not that people "receiving random windfalls can't benefit from them — in at least some cases, they can and do."

"It's that a permanent and society-wide system to provide for everyone would destroy fundamental elements of the social contract and create the wrong incentives for people as they make choices about their life's course," he said. "You can't pilot that."

Beyond philosophical objections, researchers say applying lessons from pilot programs like the one in Los Angeles on a nationwide scale will be difficult.

An analysis from the Jain Family Institute, a nonprofit that has studied several pilot programs, argues that the best pathway toward a national guaranteed income isn't through scaling up a pilot, but in reforming and expanding existing federal programs, like the earned-income tax credit and the child tax credit.

"It does not make sense to take a municipal program and build it when there are already programs in place that can be reformed," said Stephen Nuñez, lead researcher on guaranteed income at the Jain Family Institute.

For example, Dr. Nuñez said, California — along with nearly a dozen other states — already has a form of child tax credit. In California, parents with annual income of less than \$30,000 qualify.

“These can be expanded,” he said.

But based on the test in Stockton, a struggling inland port city of 320,000 in the Central Valley, Mr. Tubbs thinks local programs can play an important role in research and gaining public support for no-strings-attached cash assistance.

“When I first started working on this nearly five years ago, people called me crazy,” said Mr. Tubbs, 32, who lost a re-election bid in 2020 and is now an adviser to Gov. Gavin Newsom, a proponent of guaranteed income.

Mr. Tubbs’s passion for the idea is rooted in personal experience. He grew up in Stockton with a single mother, and they lived on a tight budget. Guaranteed income programs like those sprouting now, he said, could have helped his family.

Preliminary research from a pair of college professors, based on the first year of Stockton’s two-year program, found that giving families \$500 each month reduced those households’ income fluctuations, enabling recipients to find full-time employment.

Researchers, for example, found that 28 percent of recipients had full-time employment when the program started in February 2019; a year later, the figure was 40 percent.

In one case, a participant had been studying to get his real estate license for more than a year — a pathway to more consistent, higher-paying work — but could not find time to study while piecing together an income doing gig jobs. The money from the pilot program, researchers found, gave him the time to study and get his license.

Now the lessons are being tested on a much broader scale.

Abigail Marquez, a general manager overseeing the Los Angeles pilot program, said the goal of her city’s effort was to promote changes to the ways federal public benefit programs were designed.

“Many, if not all, public benefit program regulations contradict each other, are difficult to navigate and are not focused on creating pathways to greater economic opportunity,” Ms. Marquez said. (Some states, including California, have built-in exemptions to ensure that accepting funding from the pilot programs does not put recipients at risk of losing certain state and federal assistance.)

The Los Angeles program received \$38 million from the city. A small portion of the money comes from private funds.

According to city data, one-third of adults in Los Angeles are unable to support their families on income from full-time work alone.

“When you provide resources to families that are struggling, it can give them the breathing room to realize goals that many of us are fortunate enough to take for granted,” Mayor Eric Garcetti said when the program began.

That breathing room came at an opportune time for Ms. Barajas. After graduating from high school in 2017, she pushed aside dreams of college and began working a string of retail gigs — Claire’s, Old Navy, Walmart. She set aside \$300 from her paycheck each month to help cover her family’s rent.

“I had to work,” she said. “We had no foundation, no money in our pockets.”

Last year, Ms. Barajas, 22, received funds from an extension of the child tax credit. She used some of the money for essentials like clothes and food.

On a recent afternoon in Chatsworth, a Los Angeles neighborhood, Ms. Barajas reflected on how the money from the guaranteed income program was helping her stay afloat. She moved out of her mother's apartment in April, after an argument. Since then, she and her daughter, now 15 months old, have slept on friends' couches and sometimes stayed at pay-by-the-week motels.

For now, they are living at a 90-day shelter for women and children. Ms. Barajas hopes to attend community college this fall, but is focused first on finding a job. Many mornings, she scrolls her iPhone looking at postings before her daughter wakes up.

Most of the money from the guaranteed-income payments goes toward food, diapers and clothing, but she's trying to save several hundred dollars, enough for a security deposit for an apartment she hopes to move into with a friend.

"I'm one emergency away from having to spend money and then live on the streets and become homeless," she said. "A lot of people are just hanging on with the smallest amount of wiggle room financially."

Zohna Everett, who was part of the Stockton program, knows how it feels to live within that razor-thin margin.

Before the program began in 2019, she was driving for DoorDash five days a week, bringing in about \$100 a day. Her husband at the time worked as a truck driver, and the rent for their two-bedroom apartment was \$1,000. To help earn gas money, Ms. Everett sometimes collected recyclables and turned them in for cash.

"The money was a godsend," Ms. Everett said of the Stockton program, adding that while enrolled in it, she got a contract job at the Tesla factory in Fremont, Calif., on a production line.

Until then, Ms. Everett, 51, had been in a perpetual state of hustle, never stopping long enough to realize her exhaustion. After the payments started, she noticed she was sleeping better than she had in years.

"A weight truly was lifted from me," she said.

The payments stopped during the pandemic, but she then received stimulus money from the federal government. She had started to save some money, but after a case of Covid left her with persistent fatigue and breathing problems, she recently took a leave from her Tesla job.

"With this pandemic, there is a lot of struggling," she said. "There needs to be a permanent solution to help people."

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HEADLINE	09/09 US guided rockets critical to Ukraine fight
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/09/us/ukraine-weapons-rockets.html
GIST	<p>Out of the billions of dollars in weapons the White House has shipped to Ukraine since the Russian invasion, perhaps none have attracted as much attention as the M142 HIMARS, an advanced rocket launcher that Ukrainian troops have used to devastating effect.</p> <p>HIMARS, short for High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, is a five-ton truck that can fire long-range guided rockets. The Pentagon announced it was sending the first of four launchers to Kyiv, Ukraine, at the beginning of June, about six weeks after it started providing 155-millimeter howitzers and ammunition.</p> <p>Since then, the United States has sent Kyiv a total of 126 such howitzers and authorized shipments of up to 807,000 rounds of ammunition for them to fire.</p>

Ukraine now has 26 advanced mobile launchers that can fire rockets even farther than those howitzers can — 16 HIMARS vehicles from the United States and 10 older American-made M270 launchers that Britain and Germany provided.

On Thursday, Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that HIMARS strikes had hit more than 400 Russian targets, including command posts and ammunition depots.

The launchers are only one part of that equation. The other equally important part is the munitions they fire, called a Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System, or GMLRS.

What are these things?

The GMLRS, pronounced “Gimmlers,” is [an artillery rocket](#) — an explosive weapon propelled by a solid-fuel rocket motor. It can be launched one at a time or in salvos.

The U.S. military first used artillery rockets in World War II, and they could saturate a target area with exploding warheads far more easily than a much greater number of howitzers.

The United States largely gave up on these weapons after the Korean War. But the Pentagon began developing a new version in the 1980s as part of a suite of munitions that could destroy the tens of thousands of tanks and armored vehicles that the Pentagon assumed the Soviet Union would use in an invasion of Western Europe.

That new artillery rocket weapon, called MLRS for Multiple Launch Rocket System, was a large, tank-like weapon built on the same chassis as the Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

The M270 MLRS featured an innovative ammunition system. Its rockets were fired from bundles of preloaded launch tubes called “pods” that could be quickly discarded and replaced as a single unit, whereas older generations of launchers had to be manually reloaded one rocket at a time.

Each pod contained six unguided M26 rockets, and each rocket carried 644 small grenade-like bomblets designed to punch through the armor of an enemy tank.

The United States first used these cluster munitions in combat in 1991 during Operation Desert Storm, when more than 17,000 M26 rockets were fired at Iraqi troops, according to government records. The rocket’s bomblets had a high failure rate, leaving behind hazardous duds that could still explode if mishandled.

Dozens of American troops were [killed or wounded](#) when they encountered MLRS duds.

The Pentagon eventually decided to phase out the M26 rockets in favor of a new and more capable weapon, which became known as the GMLRS.

How is the GMLRS different from what came before?

The Pentagon initially wanted two different rockets to replace the M26 — one that contained a more reliable bomblet, and one that had a single explosive charge. They would both have longer ranges than that of the M26 as well as precision-guided accuracy.

The bomblet version, called the M30, failed to meet reliability standards and was scrapped in 2013. That left the M31 rocket, which carries 200 pounds of explosives and uses GPS signals to find its target, as the U.S. military’s main long-range rocket weapon.

The M31, which is about 13 feet long and just under nine inches in diameter, can be fired from older M270 launchers as well as the newer M142 HIMARS, giving Ukrainian soldiers the ability to launch attacks with the explosive power of precision airstrikes.

How many has the U.S. sent to Ukraine?

	<p>General Milley said on Thursday that the Pentagon had given “thousands” of GMLRS rockets to Kyiv, but the exact number fired by Ukrainian forces is unclear.</p> <p>Why are they having such a large impact in the war?</p> <p>Ukraine had soldiers who were experienced in using artillery rockets, and they quickly mastered both the HIMARS and the GMLRS. The soldiers took advantage of the launcher’s speed — they were able to drive quickly to new targets, fire and reload fast, and drive away before Russian artillery could target their position.</p> <p>The American rockets had a greater range than that of the Soviet-era weapons the Ukrainian soldiers had used before, and soon they were able to attack targets Russia had believed were safely out of range, like arms depots and command posts.</p> <p>The attacks on command facilities have kept Russian leaders on the move and have disrupted their communications, making it more difficult for them to direct combat operations.</p> <p>And now, Ukrainian soldiers are using the GMLRS to attack bridges behind enemy troops near the southern city of Kherson, leaving the Russians with fewer ways to escape.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/10 UN monitors: Russia torturing prisoners
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/10/world/ukraine-russia-war#un-human-rights-monitors-say-they-have-found-more-evidence-that-russia-is-torturing-prisoners
GIST	<p>GENEVA — United Nations human rights monitors said on Friday that Russia was denying them access to detention sites where they have found increasing evidence of torture of Ukrainian prisoners of war that may amount to war crimes.</p> <p>Prisoners arriving at some detention sites faced a “welcome process” in which they were forced to run the gantlet between two lines of guards who beat them severely as they passed, said Matilda Bogner, the head of the U.N. Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. Some prisoners were targeted for further beatings, Ms. Bogner said.</p> <p>The torture and ill-treatment of prisoners, if proved, “could rise to being war crimes,” she said, speaking by video link from Odesa, Ukraine.</p> <p>At some Russian detention sites, conditions pose a dire threat to prisoners’ health, Ms. Bogner added, saying that there were reports of inadequate food, water or sanitation. She cited in particular a penal colony at Olenivka, in Russian-controlled territory in eastern Ukraine, where she said there had been reports of prisoners grappling with infectious diseases like tuberculosis and hepatitis A.</p> <p>Dmitri Peskov, the Kremlin’s spokesman, declined to comment on the U.N. statement, saying he did not have sufficient information on the interactions between the U.N. team and the Russian authorities on the ground, according to a Reuters report.</p> <p>At least 416 people have been arbitrarily detained or forcibly disappeared in territory controlled by Russian forces since the invasion in February, according to the U.N. monitoring mission, which added that 16 of these people had been found dead and 166 had been released.</p> <p>Ukrainian forces have also tortured prisoners, usually at the time of their capture, during initial interrogations or in the process of transporting them to camps, Ms. Bogner said, adding that these actions may also amount to war crimes. The Ukrainian authorities had allowed U.N. monitors full access to detention centers across the country, where they visited 160 prisoners of war, she said. But except in one camp that appeared to meet international standards, she said most prisoners were detained in cells, violating rules that say prisoners should not be held in close confinement.</p>

	<p>Ms. Bogner also expressed concerns over a sharp deterioration of conditions in Crimea, where she reported tighter restrictions on freedom of expression and rising cases of torture, ill-treatment, enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention.</p> <p>U.N. monitors had documented the prosecution of more than 80 people in the Russian-held peninsula for “public actions directed at discrediting the armed forces of the Russian Federation,” Ms. Bogner said. The authorities there, she said, had imposed sanctions on teachers who did not endorse the war, arrested and prosecuted human rights activists and intimidated lawyers.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/10 Report: rebuilding Ukraine at least \$349B
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/10/world/ukraine-russia-war#rebuilding-ukraine-349-billion-dollars
GIST	<p>Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has caused more than \$97 billion in damage, and the cost of rebuilding the country has reached an estimated \$349 billion, according to a joint assessment issued Friday by the World Bank, the European Commission and Ukraine’s government.</p> <p>The report estimated that Ukraine had suffered \$252 billion in “aggregate losses,” which it said included economic disruptions and other costs of the conflict. Ukraine’s economy contracted sharply, the report said, with its gross domestic product showing a year-over-year decline of 15.1 percent at the end of the first quarter.</p> <p>The authors of the report said their assessment covered the period from the start of the Russian invasion on Feb. 24 through June 1. “Given the progress of the war since that date,” they wrote, “the extent of damage, losses and needs is clearly larger as of the date of publication.”</p> <p>Anna Bjerde, the World Bank’s regional vice president for Europe and Central Asia, said in a statement that the invasion continued “to exact a terrible toll, from significant civilian casualties and the displacement of millions of people to the widespread destruction of homes, businesses, social institutions, and economic activity.”</p> <p>Ukraine’s government, Ms. Bjerde said, “now faces the difficult task of balancing recovery with the country’s immediate needs, including core public services, such as health, education and social protection, which are critical to preventing further deterioration in living conditions and poverty in Ukraine.”</p> <p>An international conference is scheduled for next month in Berlin to grapple with complicated questions about Ukraine’s reconstruction, including who should pay for what, who should control the process and what kind of external oversight should be required.</p> <p>The Washington-based German Marshall Fund recommended in a report on Wednesday that the Group of 7 industrialized nations appoint a Ukraine coordinator to oversee reconstruction, ideally an American with global stature; that existing institutions be used for the project to ensure timeliness; and that different multilateral financial institutions be used, to limit the influence of Russian or Chinese board members. The report also says that Ukraine must accept strict oversight of the funds, and must strengthen its legal and judicial systems, to reduce the potential for corruption.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/10 Ukraine pushes deeper into Kharkiv region
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/10/world/ukraine-russia-war#ukrainian-forces-push-deeper-into-kharkiv-region-capturing-more-towns
GIST	<p>Ukrainian forces claimed new ground on Saturday in their surprise counteroffensive in the northeastern part of the country.</p> <p>Sweeping south from positions in the Kharkiv region in Ukraine’s northeast, Ukrainian forces have made their largest gains since routing Russian troops from Kyiv, the capital, in April. Since launching the</p>

offensive earlier in the week, Ukrainian forces have advanced up to 50 kilometers, or about 31 miles, into territory previously held by Russian forces.

“Russian forces were likely taken by surprise,” Britain’s Defense Ministry said in [its daily intelligence update](#) on Saturday. “The sector was only lightly held and Ukrainian units have captured or surrounded several towns.”

In his overnight address, President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine said the military had recaptured more than 30 settlements in the Kharkiv region.

“Actions to check and secure the territory continue,” he said. “We are gradually taking control of new settlements — everywhere we are returning the Ukrainian flag and protection for all our people.”

On Saturday, Ukraine’s military appeared to be moving rapidly to cut off the city of Izium, a logistical hub for Russian military operations.

“A Russian force around Izium is likely increasingly isolated,” Britain’s Defense Ministry said in the update, adding that Ukrainian units were “now threatening the [town of Kupiansk](#)” just north of Izium, which sits on key supply routes to the eastern front line.

“It’s capture would be a significant blow to Russia,” the ministry added.

The exact positions of Ukrainian forces in the area around Izium and Kupiansk could not be independently established. But satellite data, independent military analysts and photos and videos of Ukrainian forces indicated that they had [moved quickly toward Kupiansk](#).

Ukrainian soldiers on Friday [posted photos](#) that purported to be in the vicinity of Kupiansk, which has served as the capital of the Russian occupation in the region. The Kremlin-installed head of the city administration, Vitaly Ganchev, urged women and children to evacuate as Ukrainian forces approached.

Ukrainian and Western officials cautioned that the offensive operations were in their early days, that the situation was fluid and that the gains were far from secure. Not all of the claims of advances by Ukraine could be independently verified, and much about the state of the fighting in both the east and the south of Ukraine is shrouded in uncertainty as the government in Kyiv enforces a media blackout, restricting journalists’ access to the front.

But the new offensive in the north appears to have caught the Russian forces off guard. On Friday, its Defense Ministry said on the Telegram messaging app that it was moving troops to reinforce the Kharkiv region, without specifying their numbers or specific locations.

Ukraine’s counteroffensive in the east came in parallel to [a push in the south](#) that it had prepared for months, around the Kherson region.

With the continuing fighting in the south, Moscow’s defensive front is under pressure on two sides, the British defense ministry said.

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HEADLINE	09/09 Ukraine gains on Russia in northern front
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/09/world/europe/ukraine-russia-kharkiv.html
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian forces have scored the most significant battlefield gains since they routed Russia from the area around Kyiv in April by reclaiming territory in the northeast, according to Ukrainian officials, Western analysts and battlefield imagery.</p> <p>In his overnight address to the nation Thursday, President Volodymyr Zelensky said that the Ukrainian military had captured scores of villages and large chunks of Russian-occupied territory across Ukraine</p>

since the offensive began. “In total, more than a thousand square kilometers of the territory of Ukraine have been liberated since the beginning of September,” he said.

On Friday the Ukrainian military appeared to be moving rapidly to cut off the city of Iziium, a critical logistical hub for Russian military operations.

The exact positions of Ukrainian forces in the area around Iziium could not be independently established. But satellite data, independent military analysts and photos and videos of Ukrainian forces indicated that they had [moved quickly toward Kupiansk](#), another logistical hub just north of Iziium.

The new offensive in the north appears to have caught the Russian forces off guard. On Friday, its Defense Ministry said on Telegram that it was moving troops to reinforce the Kharkiv region, without specifying their numbers or specific locations.

Ukraine’s advances in the northeast sent a shock wave through Kremlin-friendly military bloggers, pro-war cheerleaders who typically call for more aggressive action.

“We need to be honest, the Ukrainian command has outplayed us here,” said Yury Podolyaka, a Ukrainian pro-Kremlin blogger with more than 2.2 million followers on Telegram. He warned that if the Russian forces failed to “stop the Ukrainian breakthrough” in the coming days “this will be the most serious combat defeat” for Moscow.

Ukrainian and Western officials cautioned that the offensive operations were in their early days, that the situation was fluid and that the gains were far from secure. Not all of the claims of advances by Ukraine could be independently verified, and much about the state of the fighting in both the east and the south of Ukraine is shrouded in uncertainty as the government in Kyiv enforces a media blackout, restricting journalists’ access to the front.

For months, Ukraine’s leaders declared loudly and often [their intention to launch a counteroffensive in the south](#), around the port city of Kherson. And they proceeded to batter Russian supply lines, ammunition depots and command centers in the region with precision rockets, while massing troops and orchestrating covert attacks on military bases and Russian collaborators [far behind enemy lines](#).

But they said virtually nothing about the northeast, until this week.

Accounts from witnesses, the local Ukrainian authorities, Russian proxy officials, geolocated video on social media and satellite footage offered a window into the Ukrainian campaign.

On Thursday, Ukrainian officials said their troops had pushed through the town of Balakliya, less than 30 miles from the city of Iziium, which lies close to the Donbas, the contested area of eastern Ukraine that President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia has vowed to seize. President Zelensky released video of soldiers [raising Ukraine’s blue-and-yellow flag](#) above the town’s administrative building, and other officials [posted videos](#), not all immediately authenticated, of locals coming out to [greet the soldiers](#).

Ukrainian soldiers on Friday [posted photos](#) that purported to be in the vicinity of Kupiansk, which has served as the capital of the Russian occupation in the region. The Kremlin-installed head of the city administration, Vitaly Ganchev, urged women and children to evacuate as Ukrainian forces approached.

Mr. Ganchev said the city is under “constant rocket attacks from the armed forces of Ukraine,” [according to RIA Novosti](#), a Russian state news agency.

In response to the growing threats in the south, the Russian military [redeployed thousands of troops from the Donbas](#), apparently thinning their defenses in the north and providing an opening for the Ukrainians.

Russia’s seeming inability to secure a key flank near Iziium also highlighted its challenge in defending occupied territory along front lines that stretch 1,500 miles from northeastern Ukraine to the Black Sea

coast in the south. And the battlefield setbacks seemed to underscore [the manpower issues plaguing the Russian army](#), which the United States estimates has suffered at least 80,000 wounded and killed since the invasion began in late February.

On Friday, some of Russia's military bloggers voiced dismay over the inability of Russian commanders to prepare stout defenses. Others have demanded an explanation from the Russian military command or other authorities.

Maksim Fomin called on law enforcement to figure out why Russian forces were unprepared for the Ukrainian offensive. "The situation is very difficult," he said. "Let's exhale and say that we have been defeated."

Yevgeny Poddubny, a Russian state TV reporter, posted [a video](#) of Russian transport helicopters that he said were transferring Russian troops to the Kupiansk and Izium areas, citing Russian defense officials.

Some of the pro-Kremlin bloggers have warned that the loss of large swaths of occupied lands in Ukraine would undermine the "Russia is here forever" message that the occupying authorities have been preaching in order to sway locals to support them.

While the Ukrainian gains in the north were capturing most of the attention Friday, the southern counteroffensive also made gains, with Ukraine's Security Service releasing photos of what it said was the city of Vysokopillia, in the Kherson region. That claim could not be independently verified.

Last week, Ukrainian forces reported that they had broken through the first line of Russian defenses in multiple locations in the Kherson region, where they remain engaged in fierce battles to drive the Russians back from well-fortified positions.

Michael Kofman, the director of Russian studies at C.N.A., a research institute in Arlington, Va., said the campaign in the south did not appear to be a diversion to draw Russian forces.

"These appear to be interrelated offensives," he said on Twitter on Thursday. "Kherson likely intended as a more deliberate, sequenced advance. Kharkiv to take advantage of favorable conditions."

Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said on Thursday that Ukraine has made tangible gains in recent days, but he sought to temper expectations for what will probably continue to prove a bloody campaign.

"There is fighting — both offense and defense — all the way from Kharkiv all the way down to Kherson," he said at a news conference in Germany.

Still, General Milley said the Ukrainians were making efficient use of newly acquired weapons systems to set the stage for their offensive. The American-made HIMARS missile system, he said, has been used to strike more than 400 targets. And it is just one of a number of advanced weapons systems now being deployed by the Ukrainians.

But he emphasized that Russia, although its supply lines were strained and its manpower troubles far from resolved, retained significant advantages in the war.

"The war is not over," he said. "Russia's a big country. They have very serious ambitions with respect to Ukraine."

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HEADLINE	09/10 Charles is formally proclaimed as king
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/10/world/queen-elizabeth-king-charles#king-charles-iii-is-formally-proclaimed-to-his-new-role

LONDON — For more than 300 years, Britain’s kings and queens have been proclaimed sovereign in a ceremony laced with history. But on Saturday morning, for the first time, the public was able to see the process in action as the proclamation of King Charles III was broadcast live, weaving just a bit of modernity into a centuries-old tradition.

While Charles became the new monarch automatically upon the death of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, on Thursday, his new role was officially proclaimed on Saturday morning in a ceremony filled with pomp and procedure, which was held at St. James’s Palace, a Tudor royal residence near Buckingham Palace.

In the moving and solemn rite, one that was dictated by protocol and had echoes of a much earlier age, the council made the official confirmation of Charles as king, amid a number of other formalities. But perhaps the most striking moment came when so many senior members of British life in unison declared, “God save the king.”

King Charles [later addressed the room](#) and the British nation, and emphasized his mother’s legacy and his commitment to continue it.

“My mother gave an example of lifelong love and of selfless service,” he said. “My mother’s reign was unequalled in its duration, dedication and devotion. Even as we grieve, we give thanks for this most faithful life. I am deeply aware of this great inheritance and of the duties and heavy responsibilities of sovereignty which have now passed to me.”

The ceremony took place in two parts, the first of which included a meeting of the king’s Privy Council, a group of advisers to the monarch who have typically reached high levels of public office. The six living former prime ministers — Boris Johnson, Theresa May, David Cameron, Gordon Brown, Tony Blair and John Major — were present as part of the Privy Council, as was Keir Starmer, the opposition Labour leader.

The Privy Council also includes Prince William, who, as the new heir to the throne, was given the title Prince of Wales on Friday by his father. The council — which included Charles’s wife, Camilla, the queen consort; Prime Minister Liz Truss; and senior religious figures — all signed the proclamation in the ceremony.

Notably, not a single person present in the room had been part of the ceremony the last time around, when Queen Elizabeth was proclaimed sovereign 70 years ago.

Later, King Charles III met with his Privy Council and made traditional public statements that generations of monarchs have made before him. He gave a personal and political inaugural declaration, which in the past would have happened in a closed ceremony with the text later published in the [London Gazette](#), the official government record. Charles also made an oath to uphold the Church of Scotland.

The accession council meeting also included a litany of official proclamations for King Charles III to sign off on, including one that makes the day of the queen’s funeral a public holiday across Britain. The date of the funeral has not yet been announced.

The ceremony often felt like a holdover of an earlier time, but the procedures, enshrined in law, also gave a nod to the foundations of the modern British state. After the council meeting, a proclamation was read out as trumpets blared from the balcony at St. James’s Palace and the Garter King of Arms — the principal adviser to the monarch on all matters of ceremony and heraldry — in front of a few hundred members of the public officially declared the reign of King Charles III.

The old and new seemed to stand in stark contrast. Members of the public who gathered to hear the proclamation held cellphones above their heads to record the view as they sang “God Save the King,” the newly adjusted national anthem.

	<p>Heralds on horseback rode from the palace and began passing the proclamation across the country, but the news was first read out at the Royal Exchange in London at noon, and then the capitals of the nations of Britain will heard proclamations on Sunday. Historically, this relay of royal announcements that fanned out across the country was the fastest way to spread the word of the new sovereign's taking up the throne.</p> <p>Charles's day does not end with the ceremonial aspects, though, as his role as head of state is also a constitutional one. Later on Saturday, he will meet with Ms. Truss, the newly appointed prime minister, and members of her cabinet. He will also have audiences with senior members of the opposition Labour Party, the archbishop of Canterbury and the dean of Westminster.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/09 Spokane demands WSDOT remove camp
SOURCE	https://www.krem.com/article/news/local/homeless/camp-hope-clear-out-deadline/293-6703fb8f-297d-4e18-a0c3-f3ec3b4a36cd
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — The city of Spokane has given the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) until Oct. 14 to clear the homeless encampment near I-90 and Freya Street.</p> <p>The property is owned by WSDOT and has been occupied by homeless campers for nearly 10 months.</p> <p>There are more than 600 people currently living at the camp, according to an employee with Jewels Helping Hands.</p> <p>In a letter obtained by KREM 2, Spokane City Administrator Johnnie Perkins said the city expects WSDOT to begin clearing the camp by Sept. 23 and remove the entire camp no later than Oct. 14.</p> <p>Perkins said the property has "become a burden to the City of Spokane" due to the conditions at the camp, which include "illegal camping, code violations, health concerns, excessive amounts of solid waste that have resulted in expensive removal costs at taxpayer expense, unsanitary human waste disposal, hundreds of neighborhood complaints, a significant increase in criminal activity," among other conditions.</p> <p>Perkins also said WSDOT failed to use its resources to clear the camp quickly, with the camp being on the property for 10 months.</p> <p>According to the letter, WSDOT was "placed on notice" in February by the Spokane Police Department (SPD) that the property represented "an ongoing nuisance issue" to the "quiet enjoyment and tranquility of the nearby area."</p> <p>In June, WSDOT, the Housing Assistance Unit and the Community Services Housing Division of the State Department of Commerce attended a meeting with the city of Spokane to discuss the camp. According to Perkins, WSDOT representatives identified Spokane as "one of eleven high-priority areas" that required outreach and assessment of the encampment.</p> <p>During that meeting, Perkins said WSP indicated they would take the lead on clearing the camp. He also said the Department of Commerce indicated it had funding for the process.</p> <p>However, Perkins said this never happened.</p> <p>In the letter, Perkins requested that WSDOT take "significant and immediate steps" to clear the camp, including all properties adjacent to the camp being fenced and secured from trespassing. He also requested Washington State Patrol (WSP) troopers join SPD officers in watching over the camp from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. every day.</p> <p>Perkins wrote that the city is prepared to take legal action against WSDOT if the camp is not cleared, which will consist of deeming the property a chronic nuisance and a citation. If a citation is given, WSDOT will have 10 days from service to "eliminate the conditions which constitute a nuisance."</p>

	<p>The letter also claims that the city of Spokane has spent more than \$350,000 since March 1 to address the issues at the camp. The money spent on the camp was reportedly supposed to be used "to provide additional housing options," according to the letter.</p> <p>"This is unacceptable and the City of Spokane intends to seek reimbursement from the State of Washington is an abatement agreement is not immediately established, which includes fulfillment of the Department of Transportation's verbal commitments made during the meeting on June 2," Perkins wrote.</p> <p>The city is giving WSDOT until Monday, Sept. 12, to respond to the letter with a plan of action.</p> <p>WSDOT sent KREM 2 the following statement regarding the letter: <i>WSDOT received the letter in question from the City of Spokane late yesterday, is considering it, and will formally respond at a later date.</i></p>
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HEADLINE	09/09 Oregon utilities shut power amid fire danger
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/oregon-utilities-shut-power-amid-high-dry-winds-fire-danger
GIST	<p>PORTLAND, Ore. — Oregon utilities shut down power to tens of thousands of customers on Friday as dry easterly winds swept into the region in the hopes that it would lessen the risk of wildfires in extremely dry and hot conditions.</p> <p>Power shut-offs due to extreme fire weather, common in California, are relatively new to the Pacific Northwest. The plans, which were part of permanent rules approved in May to manage wildfire danger in high-risk areas, mark the new reality in a region better known for its rain and temperate rainforests.</p> <p>Portland General Electric halted power to about 30,000 customers in 12 service areas — including the posh West Hills neighborhood of Portland — and Pacific Power shut down service to more than 7,000 customers in a small community on the Pacific Coast, where a wildfire burned two years ago, and in pockets southeast of the state capitol of Salem.</p> <p>All told, more than 40,000 customers could lose power by late Friday in planned shutoffs as winds of up to 60 mph hit and temperatures hovered in the high 80s and low 90s.</p> <p>Schools in the areas with planned power outages canceled classes and authorities urged residents to charge cellphones and be ready to evacuate at a moment's notice.</p> <p>Climate change is bringing drier conditions to the Pacific Northwest and that requires strategies that have been common in fire-prone California for the past decade or more, said Erica Fleishman, director of the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute at Oregon State University.</p> <p>Wind patterns haven't changed, but those winds are now coinciding more frequently with drier vegetation and hotter temperatures — a toxic mix for fire ignition, rapid spread and extreme fire behavior, she said.</p> <p>"I don't know whether this is the solution, but it's an interim effort to manage wildfire risk," Fleishman said. "People are going, 'Oh my gosh!' The areas we thought were safe, they're realizing those are not immune to fire anymore. The fire likelihood is changing."</p> <p>The proactive power shutoffs were just the second for Portland General Electric ever. The utility shut down power to 5,000 customers in 2020 near Mount Hood during firestorms that ravaged the state. Extreme winds over Labor Day weekend led to wildfires that burned more than 1 million acres (405,000 hectares), destroyed 4,000 homes and killed at least 11 people — and utilities were blamed for some of those fire starts.</p>

Pacific Power, another major utility in Oregon, said if it shuts off power to customers in six counties later Friday, as anticipated, it will be first time the company has done so since putting a wildfire mitigation plan in place in Oregon in 2018.

The utility was sued last year by residents in two towns that burned to ashes in the 2020 wildfires who blamed the company for not shutting down power in advance of the devastating wind storm.

Pacific Power has since hired a team of meteorologists to make fire weather forecasts and is spending more than \$500 million to “harden” its electric grid in high-risk areas by replacing wooden poles with carbonized ones and encasing power lines and conductor boxes to reduce the chances of a spark, said Drew Hanson, a Pacific Power spokesman.

“You can look at the West in general and climate change has impacted areas from Southern California, and then Northern California and now up into this region as well, we’re seeing those same conditions,” he said.

“It’s something we are taking very seriously. We realize the changing landscape. We’ve been changing and evolving along with it.”

A number of blazes are burning in Oregon.

The largest is the Double Creek Fire burning in northeastern Oregon near the Idaho border. The fire grew by nearly 47 square miles (122 square kilometers) Wednesday because of wind gusts up to 50 mph (80 kph) and as of Friday had burned a total of nearly 214 square miles (554 square kilometers). It’s threatening about 100 homes near the community of Imnaha.

In Central Oregon, the Cedar Creek Fire east of Oakridge has burned nearly 52 square miles (135 square kilometers). On Friday, officials ordered residents of greater Oakridge, Westfir and High Prairie areas to be ready to evacuate at a moment’s notice due to increased fire activity.

The Van Meter Fire, which started Wednesday, is burning on Stukel Mountain about 13 miles (21 kilometers) southeast of Klamath Falls. One home and four structures have been destroyed and about 260 structures are threatened by that blaze, officials said.

The Rum Creek Fire was also burning in southwest Oregon and was almost halfway contained at about 33 square miles (82 square kilometers).

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Cyber, Tech Awareness

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HEADLINE	09/12 Montenegro faces massive cyberattack
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-nato-technology-hacking-religion-5c2bd851027b56a77eaf9385b7d5d741
GIST	<p>PODGORICA, Montenegro (AP) — At the government headquarters in NATO-member Montenegro, the computers are unplugged, the internet is switched off and the state’s main websites are down. The blackout comes amid a massive cyberattack against the small Balkan state which officials say bears the hallmark of pro-Russian hackers and its security services.</p> <p>The coordinated attack that started around Aug. 20 crippled online government information platforms and put Montenegro’s essential infrastructure, including banking, water and electricity power systems, at high risk.</p>

The attack, described by experts as unprecedented in its intensity and the longest in the tiny nation's recent history, capped a string of cyberattacks since Russia invaded Ukraine in which hackers targeted Montenegro and other European nations, most of them NATO members.

Sitting at his desk in Montenegro's capital, Podgorica, in front of a blackened PC screen, Defense Minister Rasko Konjevic said government officials were advised by cyber experts, including a team of FBI investigators that was dispatched to the Balkan state, to go offline for security reasons.

"We have been faced with serious challenges related to the cyberattack for about 20 days, and the entire state system, the system of state administration, and the system of services to citizens are functioning at a rather restrictive level," Konjevic told The Associated Press.

He said experts from several countries are trying to help restore the Montenegro government's computer system and find proof of who is behind the attack.

Montenegro officials said the attack that crippled the government's digital infrastructure was likely carried out by a Russian-speaking ransomware gang that generally operates without Kremlin interference as long as it doesn't target Russian allies. The gang, called Cuba ransomware, claimed responsibility for at least part of the Montenegro cyberattack, in which it created a special virus for the attack called Zerodate.

Montenegro's Agency for National Security blamed the attack squarely on Russia.

Russia has a strong motive for such an attack because Montenegro, which it once considered a strong ally, joined NATO in 2017 despite the Kremlin's opposition. It has also joined Western sanctions against Moscow over the Ukraine invasion, which led Moscow to brand Montenegro an "enemy state" along with several other countries that joined the embargo.

"In such attacks, there are usually organizations that are a mask for state intelligence services," Konjevic said, adding that the defense ministry's NATO-related data is protected "in a special way" while the other possible leaks "are being investigated."

The cyberattack comes amid an apparent attempt by Moscow to destabilize the Balkan region that was at war in the 1990s through the Kremlin's Balkan ally Serbia, and thus at least partly shift the world's attention from the war in Ukraine.

Montenegro, which split from much larger Serbia in 2006, is currently run by an interim government that has lost parliamentary support because of Prime Minister Dritan Abazovic's shady deals with the influential Serbian Orthodox Church without the consent of the whole coalition that supported the government.

Montenegro's roughly 620,000 people are deeply split between those who want the country to restore its close ties to Serbia and Russia and those who want it to continue on its path of the European Union membership.

"A real war is being waged in Ukraine, with bombs, a war of conquest by Russia," political analyst Zlatko Vujovic said. "Something similar is happening in Montenegro. There are no bombs, but there is a huge tension, a huge hybrid conflict in which the interests of Russia and its and Serbian intelligence services are interconnected."

Other Eastern European states deemed enemies of Russia have also faced cyberattacks, mostly nuisance-level denial-of-service campaigns that render websites unreachable by flooding them with junk data but don't damage them. Targets have included networks in Moldova, Slovenia, Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Albania.

Last week, Albania severed diplomatic relations with Iran and kicked out its diplomats after a cyberattack in July that it blamed on the Islamic Republic.

“Montenegro remains a target within both the public and private sector, as well as many other countries in that region,” said Patrick Flynn, head of the advanced programs group at Trellix, a U.S.-based cybersecurity company. “We have observed a blend of historically based nation state actors and well-known ransomware groups.”

“This recent focus on NATO member countries reinforces the need for hyper vigilance within key businesses as well as government (and) critical infrastructure cyber security environments,” he said in an email to the AP.

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HEADLINE	09/10 NKorea hackers target energy companies
SOURCE	https://therecord.media/cisco-log4j-vulnerability-used-to-attack-energy-companies-in-canada-us-and-japan/
GIST	<p>Hackers continue to abuse the endemic Log4j vulnerability months after its discovery, according to a new report from Cisco researchers who discovered a campaign targeting energy companies across the U.S., Canada, Japan and other countries.</p> <p>Cisco Talos security researchers Jung soo An, Asheer Malhotra and Vitor Ventura said they have been tracking a longstanding campaign between February and July that they believe is the work of North Korean state-sponsored hackers with the Lazarus Group.</p> <p>The group’s initial attack vector was the exploitation of the Log4j vulnerability on exposed VMware Horizon servers — a tried and true method dozens of criminal and state-backed groups have used since the bug emerged in December.</p> <p>Once the hackers have a foothold in enterprise networks, they deploy custom malware implants called VSingle and YamaBot. The report notes that the Japanese CERT recently published reports on both malware and attributed them to Lazarus.</p> <p>The researchers tied the activity they found to a June report from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) about two incidents from April and May.</p> <p>“In this campaign, Lazarus was primarily targeting energy companies in Canada, the U.S. and Japan. The main goal of these attacks was likely to establish long-term access into victim networks to conduct espionage operations in support of North Korean government objectives,” the researchers said.</p> <p>“This activity aligns with historical Lazarus intrusions targeting critical infrastructure and energy companies to establish long-term access to siphon off proprietary intellectual property.”</p> <p>Despite being discovered in December 2021, CISA included Log4Shell on its list of the top 15 routinely exploited vulnerabilities in 2021.</p> <p>In recent months, several cybersecurity firms have warned that Log4Shell is still an issue despite the global campaign to patch the vulnerability.</p> <p>Symantec said an unnamed engineering company with energy and military customers was hacked by the North Korean government using the Log4j vulnerability.</p> <p>Yotam Perkal, vulnerability researcher at cybersecurity firm Rezilion, released a report in April that found 55% of applications still contained an obsolete version of Log4j in their latest versions.</p> <p>The new U.S. Cyber Safety Review Board recently released a wide-ranging report on the bug’s origins, finding that despite efforts by organizations across the federal and private sectors to protect their networks, Log4j had become an “endemic vulnerability”</p>

	“Log4j is not over. This was not a historic look back and now we’re in the clear,” Silvers said. “The board found that it is likely that organizations are going to be dealing with continued Log4j exposure for years to come, maybe a decade or longer.”
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HEADLINE	09/12 Cisco confirms stolen company data leak
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/cisco-confirms-yanluowang-ransomware-leaked-stolen-company-data/
GIST	<p>Cisco has confirmed that the data leaked yesterday by the Yanluowang ransomware gang was stolen from the company network during a cyberattack in May.</p> <p>However, the company says in an update that the leak does not change the initial assessment that the incident has no impact on the business:</p> <p><i>On September 11, 2022, the bad actors who previously published a list of file names from this security incident to the dark web, posted the actual contents of the same files to the same location on the dark web. The content of these files match what we already identified and disclosed.</i></p> <p><i>Our previous analysis of this incident remains unchanged-we continue to see no impact to our business, including Cisco products or services, sensitive customer data or sensitive employee information, intellectual property, or supply chain operations.</i></p> <p>In a report in August, Cisco announced that its network had been breached by the Yanluowang ransomware after the hackers compromised an employee's VPN account.</p> <p>According to the company, the stolen data included non-sensitive files from the employee’s Box folder and the attack was contained before Yanluowang ransomware could start encrypting systems.</p> <p>Hacker claims stealing 55GB of data</p> <p>The threat actor, however, claimed otherwise. Yanluowang’s leader told BleepingComputer that they stole thousands of files amounting to 55GB and that the cache included classified documents, technical schematics, and source code.</p> <p>The hacker did not provide any proof, though. They only shared a screenshot indicating access to what appears to be a development system. BleepingComputer could not verify the accuracy of this claim.</p> <p>When asked for a comment on the matter, Cisco denied the possibility that the intruders had exfiltrated or accessed any source code.</p> <p>“We have no evidence to suggest the actor accessed Cisco product source code or any substantial access beyond what we have already publicly disclosed,” – Cisco</p> <p>Late last month, the research team at cybersecurity company eSentire published a report with evidence that linked Yanluowang, “Evil Corp” (UNC2165), and FiveHands ransomware (UNC2447).</p> <p>The hacker told BleepingComputer that they acted alone in breaching Cisco and were not affiliated with any of those factions.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Hacker: secret files of Indonesia president
SOURCE	https://indonesiaexpat.id/news/hacker-claims-hacking-president-jokowis-documents/?web_view=true
GIST	A hacker known as Bjorka has again caused a stir by allegedly leaking a number of correspondence documents that claimed to belong to President Joko Widodo (Jokowi).

The documents were hacked by Bjorka's account on the BreachForums page on Friday 9th September 2022.

After causing a public uproar for leaking 105 million data points of the General Elections Commission Of Indonesia, which were traded in online forums, Bjorka claimed that he has now managed to leak the secret documents of the President.

In the breached site, Bjorka includes the logo of the President of the Republic of Indonesia. He refers to leaking secret documents of the President in the form of letters between 2019-2021.

The data allegedly belonging to the President consists of the title of the letter, the number of the letter, the sender, the sender's ID, the date of the letter, and so on.

In his upload, the hacker explained that he had uploaded a total of 679,180 documents totalling 40MB in the form of compressed data.

"As many as 679,000 letters and documents to the President of Indonesia were leaked to the deep web by the bad actor 'Bjorka'," wrote the Twitter account [@darktracer_int](#), as quoted on Saturday 10th September 2022.

In addition, Bjorka also leaked documents sent to the President, including a collection of letters sent by the State Intelligence Agency which were labelled as secret.

The head of the Presidential Secretariat, Heru Budi Hartono, responded to this news by confirming that none of the contents of the letter were hacked.

"There is no data on the contents of any letters that have been hacked. However, these attempts to hack have violated the law," Hartono said when confirmed on Saturday.

"I think law enforcement will take legal action. Later there will be an official statement from the relevant officials," he [concluded](#).

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HEADLINE	09/11 Iran APT42 behind espionage attacks
SOURCE	https://thehackernews.com/2022/09/iranian-apt42-launched-over-30.html
GIST	<p>A state-sponsored advanced persistent threat (APT) actor newly christened APT42 (formerly UNC788) has been attributed to over 30 confirmed espionage attacks against individuals and organizations of strategic interest to the Iranian government at least since 2015.</p> <p>Cybersecurity firm Mandiant said the group operates as the intelligence gathering arm of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), not to mention shares partial overlaps with another cluster called APT35, which is also known as Charming Kitten, Cobalt Illusion, ITG18, Phosphorus, TA453, and Yellow Garuda.</p> <p>APT42 has exhibited a propensity to strike various industries such as non-profits, education, governments, healthcare, legal, manufacturing, media, and pharmaceuticals spanning at least 14 countries, including in Australia, Europe, the Middle East, and the U.S.</p> <p>Intrusions aimed at the pharmaceutical sector are also notable for the fact that they commenced at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, indicating the threat actor's ability to swiftly modify its campaigns in order to meet its operational priorities.</p> <p>"APT42 uses highly targeted spear-phishing and social engineering techniques designed to build trust and rapport with their victims in order to access their personal or corporate email accounts or to install Android malware on their mobile devices," Mandiant said in a report.</p>

The goal is to exploit the fraudulent trust relationships to steal credentials, enabling the threat actor to leverage the access to conduct follow-on compromises of corporate networks to gather sensitive data and use the breached accounts to phish additional victims.

Attack chains involve a mix of highly targeted spear-phishing messages aimed at individuals and organizations of strategic interest to Iran. They are also conceived with the intent to build trust with former government officials, journalists, policymakers, and the Iranian diaspora abroad in hopes of distributing malware.

Outside of using hacked email accounts associated with think tanks to target researchers and other academic organizations, APT42 is often known to impersonate journalists and other professionals to engage with the victims for several days or even weeks before sending a malicious link.

In one attack observed in May 2017, the group targeted members of an Iranian opposition group operating from Europe and North America with email messages that contained links to rogue Google Books pages, which redirected victims to sign-in pages designed to siphon credentials and two-factor authentication codes.

Surveillance operations involve the distribution of Android malware such as VINETHORN and PINEFLOWER via text messages that are capable of recording audio and phone calls, extracting multimedia content and SMSes, and tracking geolocations. A VINETHORN payload spotted between April and October 2021 masqueraded as a VPN app called SaferVPN.

"The use of Android malware to target individuals of interest to the Iranian government provides APT42 with a productive method of obtaining sensitive information on targets, including movement, contacts, and personal information," the researchers noted.

The group is also said to use a raft of lightweight Windows malware from time to time – a PowerShell toehold backdoor named TAMECAT, a VBA-based macro dropper dubbed TABBYCAT, and a reverse shell macro known as VBREVSHELL – to augment their credential harvesting and espionage activities.

APT42's links to APT35 stems from links to an uncategorized threat cluster tracked as UNC2448, which Microsoft ([DEV-0270](#)) and Secureworks ([Cobalt Mirage](#)) disclosed as a Phosphorus subgroup carrying out ransomware attacks for financial gain using BitLocker.

Mandiant's analysis further lends credence to Microsoft's findings that DEV-0270/UNC2448 is operated by a front company that uses two public aliases, namely Secnerd and Lifeweb, both of which are connected to Najee Technology Hooshmand.

That having said, it's suspected the two adversarial collectives, despite their affiliation with IRGC, originate from disparate missions based on differences in targeting patterns and the tactics employed.

A key point of distinction is that while APT35 is oriented towards long-term, resource-intensive operations targeting different industry verticals in the U.S. and the Middle East, APT42's activities focus on individuals and entities for "domestic politics, foreign policy, and regime stability purposes."

"The group has displayed its ability to rapidly alter its operational focus as Iran's priorities change over time with evolving domestic and geopolitical conditions," the researchers said.

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HEADLINE	09/10 Albania suffers renewed cyberattack
SOURCE	https://www.securityweek.com/albania-suffers-renewed-cyberattack-blames-iran
GIST	Albania has suffered a renewed cyberattack, the country's interior ministry said on Saturday, blaming Iran which Tirana also accused of an earlier assault on its digital systems.

"The national police's computer systems were hit Friday by a cyberattack which, according to initial information, was committed by the same actors who in July attacked the country's public and government service systems," the ministry said in a statement.

"In order to neutralize the criminal act and secure the systems," the authorities have shut down computer control systems at seaports, airports and border posts, the statement said.

In a tweet, Prime Minister Edi Rama denounced "another cyberattack (committed by) the same aggressors already condemned by Albania's friendly countries and allies."

Albania blamed Iran for the [July attack](#) and on Wednesday [cut diplomatic ties](#) over the affair. The two countries have been bitter foes for years, since the Balkan state began hosting members of the opposition People's Mujahedeen of Iran, or Mujahedeen-e-Khalq (MEK), on its soil.

Rama on Wednesday accused Iran of directing a cyberattack against Albanian institutions on July 15 in a bid to "paralyze public services and hack data and electronic communications from the government systems".

It was the first time Tirana spoke about the alleged attack.

"The Council of Ministers has decided on the severance of diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran with immediate effect," said Rama.

"The said attack failed its purpose. Damages may be considered minimal compared to the goals of the aggressor. All systems came back fully operational and there was no irreversible wiping of data."

The prime minister went on to say that Iranian diplomats and embassy staff had 24 hours to leave the country.

- Iranian denials -

Iran rejected the accusation it was behind the cyberattack as "baseless" and called Albania's decision to sever diplomatic ties "an ill-considered and short-sighted action".

"Iran as one of the target countries of cyberattacks on its critical infrastructure rejects and condemns any use of cyber space as a tool to attack the critical infrastructure of other countries," its foreign ministry said.

The [US announced sanctions Friday](#) on Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security and its minister Esmail Khatib over Tehran's alleged involvement.

The Islamic republic has also been targeted by cyberattacks, most notably in 2010 when the [Stuxnet](#) virus -- believed to have been engineered by Israel and the US -- infected its nuclear program.

Albania agreed in 2013 to take in members of the MEK at the request of Washington and the United Nations, with thousands settling in the Balkan country over the years.

Following the collapse of its communist government in the early 1990s, Albania has transformed into a steadfast ally of the United States and the West, officially joining NATO in 2009.

The MEK backed Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in the 1979 revolution that ousted the shah but rapidly fell out with the new Islamic authorities and embarked on a decades-long campaign to overthrow the regime.

The MEK regularly hosts summits in Albania that have long attracted support from conservative US Republicans, including former vice president Mike Pence, who delivered a keynote address at an event in June.

	A month later, the group postponed another summit citing unspecified security threats targeting the event.
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HEADLINE	09/09 Ransomware hits Ky. 'bourbon capital'
SOURCE	https://therecord.media/bardstown-ransomware-isp/
GIST	<p>As tourists descended on Bardstown, Kentucky — the “Bourbon Capital of the World” — for Labor Day weekend, the town had a problem: A ransomware attack hit the local government, knocking municipal internet service provider (ISP) Bardstown Connect offline.</p> <p>The initial outage struck last Friday and lasted 18 hours, the Nelson County Gazette reported. Bardstown is a small city of roughly 13,000 people — and Bardstown Connect is the high speed ISP for a large portion of the city’s residents and local businesses.</p> <p>Cybercriminal gangs have often struck local governments which may not have the IT resources to immediately respond — at times disrupting vital services.</p> <p>Emsisoft threat analyst Brett Callow says this is the 34th local government attack he’s tracked so far this year. But the disruption of Bardstown Connect stands out, he said.</p> <p>“Governments being hit by ransomware is nothing unusual. What is unusual for a city-operated ISP to be affected, knocking both people and businesses offline,” Callow said.</p> <p>“In fact, it’s the first time I can recall this happening,” he added.</p> <p>Recorded Future threat analyst and ransomware researcher Allan Liska agreed the attack appears to represent a new, and particularly devastating, tactic.</p> <p>“The internet disruption for all of those people is huge,” Liska said.</p> <p>The blackout cost businesses tourist dollars because they couldn’t process credit cards without internet access, according to local outlet WDRB. The Nelson County Sheriff’s office also had to switch to AT&T hotspots and relay calls through a State Police post, WDRB reported.</p> <p>However, issues continued throughout the week, both for some Bardstown Connect customers and those seeking to access some digital city services.</p> <p>“We are still hard at work restoring services. We will make a post here and likely on the official government pages when e-mail services have been fully restored,” Bardstown Connect posted to Facebook on Monday.</p> <p>An ongoing investigation</p> <p>Thursday, nearly a week after the major outage began, the city acknowledged it was the “victim of a cyberattack involving ransomware.”</p> <p>“Working around the clock through the holiday weekend, our priorities have been fully investigating the cyberattack and getting services restored for our customers and constituents,” the city said in a post on its Facebook page. “So far, we have successfully restored all Bardstown Connect customer email accounts that are hosted by the City and brought back internet services for a vast majority of impacted residents.”</p> <p>The investigation remains ongoing, Bardstown Mayor Dick Heaton said in a Thursday press conference. The city had not paid a ransom, but he couldn’t speculate how the investigation would proceed, he said.</p> <p>In the early days of ransomware attacks on local governments, such payments were common, according to Liska. But they’ve become increasingly frowned upon, he said. In some areas, such as in North Carolina, ransomware payments from government entities are banned.</p>

The city had focused on restoring services to network customers as quickly as possible, but was still working to restore systems affected by the attack in their own back offices, according to Heaton.

Day-to-day city operations largely continued uninterrupted, he said.

“Our people have adapted very well to this – we have a surplus amount of information on paper, maps and stuff, so we retained a lot of what they need,” Heaton said.

The city is investigating the attack itself with the help of cybersecurity firm Kroll as well as local law enforcement with FBI and DHS assisting, according to Heaton.

The ability for the attackers to access many different parts of Bardstown’s systems appears to reflect the often flat nature of municipal and other small government networks, according to Liska.

“We see this all the time where the ransomware actors get in through, say, the town’s finance department, but they are able to go over to, say, the courts. The networks aren’t segmented,” he said.

But this could be particularly concerning for towns that run municipal broadband networks, something not especially appealing to small cities like Bardstown in scenic locations who may seek to attract remote workers, Liska added.

“I think this should also serve as a wakeup call to towns that are offering municipal broadband — security has to be part of your business plan,” he said.

Bardstown has deployed “state of the art threat monitoring systems” on its networks, changed system passwords, and taken other steps to improve security in response to the attack, Heaton said.

However, he also asked for patience from city residents and Bardstown Connect subscribers.

“There may be some unexpected bumps in the road that could cause additional intermittent outages – if that happens, like it did this past weekend, we will work to restore services as quickly as possible,” Heaton said.

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HEADLINE	09/09 Commonly overlooked API security risks
SOURCE	https://thehackernews.com/2022/09/6-top-api-security-risks-favored.html
GIST	<p>Security threats are always a concern when it comes to APIs. API security can be compared to driving a car. You must be cautious and review everything closely before releasing it into the world. By failing to do so, you're putting yourself and others at risk.</p> <p>API attacks are more dangerous than other breaches. Facebook had a 50M user account affected by an API breach, and an API data breach on the Hostinger account exposed 14M customer records.</p> <p>If a hacker gets into your API endpoints, it could spell disaster for your project. Depending on the industries and geographies you're talking about, insecure APIs could get you into hot water. Especially in the EU, if you're serving the banking, you could face massive legal and compliance problems if you're discovered to be using insecure APIs.</p> <p>To mitigate these risks, you need to be aware of the potential API vulnerabilities that cybercriminals can exploit.</p> <p>6 Commonly Overlooked API Security Risks</p> <p>#1 No API Visibility and Monitoring Means' Risk'</p>

When you expand your use of cloud-based networks, the number of devices and APIs in use also increases. Unfortunately, this growth also leads to less visibility on what APIs you expose internally or externally.

Shadow, hidden, or deprecated APIs which fall out of your security team's visibility create more opportunities for successful cyberattacks on unknown APIs, API parameters, and business logic. Traditional tools like API gateway lack the ability to offer a complete inventory of all APIs.

Must have API visibility, includes

- Centralized visibility as well as an inventory of all APIs
- Detailed view of API traffics
- Visibility of APIs transmitting sensitive information
- Automatic API risk analysis with predefined criteria

#2 API Incompetence

Paying attention to your API calls is important to avoid passing duplicate or repeated requests to the API. When two deployed APIs try to use the same URL, it can cause repetitive and redundant API usage problems. This is because the endpoints on both APIs are using the same URL. To avoid this, each API should have its own unique URL with optimization.

#3 Service Availability Threats

Targeted DDoS API attacks, with the help of botnets, can overload CPU cycles and processor power of the API server, sending service calls with invalid requests and making it unavailable for legitimate traffic. DDoS API attacks target not only your servers where the APIs are running but also each API endpoint.

Rate limiting grants you the confidence to maintain your applications healthy, but a good response plan comes with multi-layer security solutions like [AppTrana's API protection](#). The accurate and fully managed API protection continuously monitors the API traffic and instantly blocks malicious requests before reaching your server.

#4 Hesitating over API Utilization

As a B2B company, you often need to expose your internal API utilization numbers to teams outside the organization. This can be a great way to facilitate collaboration and allow others to access your data and services. However, it's essential to carefully consider to whom you give your API access and what level of access they need. You don't want to open your API too broadly and create security risks.

API calls need to be monitored closely when they're shared between partners or customers. This helps ensure that everyone uses the API as intended and does not overload the system.

#5 API Injection

API injection is a term used to describe when malicious code is injected with the API request. The injected command, when executed, can even delete the user's entire site from the server. The primary reason APIs are vulnerable to this risk is that the API developer fails to sanitize the input before it turns up in the API code.

This security loophole causes severe problems for users, including identity theft and data breaches, so it's essential to be aware of the risk. Add input validation on the server side to prevent injection attacks and avoid executing special characters.

#6 Attacks Against IoT Devices through APIs

The effective utilization of IoT depends on the level of API security management; if that is not happening, you will have a tough time with your IoT device.

As time goes on and technology advances, hackers will always use new ways to exploit vulnerabilities in IoT products. While APIs enable powerful extensibility, they open new entrances for hackers to access

	<p>sensitive data on your IoT devices. To avoid many threats and challenges IoT devices faces, APIs must be more secure.</p> <p>Therefore, you need to keep your IoT devices updated with the latest security patches to ensure they are protected against the latest threats.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/10 New tactic: intermittent ransom encryption
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/ransomware-gangs-switching-to-new-intermittent-encryption-tactic/
GIST	<p>A growing number of ransomware groups are adopting a new tactic that helps them encrypt their victims' systems faster while reducing the chances of being detected and stopped.</p> <p>This tactic is called intermittent encryption, and it consists of encrypting only parts of the targeted files' content, which would still render the data unrecoverable without using a valid decryptor+key.</p> <p>For example, by skipping every other 16 bytes of a file, the encryption process takes almost half of the time required for full encryption but still locks the contents for good.</p> <p>Additionally, because the encryption is milder, automated detection tools that rely on detecting signs of trouble in the form of intense file IO operations are more likely to fail.</p> <p>"What the cool kids use." SentinelLabs has posted a report examining a trend started by LockFile in mid-2021 and now adopted by the likes of Black Basta, ALPHV (BlackCat), PLAY, Agenda, and Qyick.</p> <p>These groups actively promote the presence of intermittent encryption features in their ransomware family to entice affiliates to join the RaaS operation.</p> <p>"Notably, Qyick features intermittent encryption, which is what the cool kids are using as you read this. Combined with the fact that is written in Go, the speed is unmatched," describes a Qyick advertisement on hacking forums.</p> <p>Agenda ransomware offers intermittent encryption as an optional and configurable setting. The three possible partial encryption modes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skip-step [skip: N, step: Y] - Encrypt every Y MB of the file, skipping N MB. • fast [f: N] - Encrypt the first N MB of the file. • percent [n: N; p:P] - Encrypt every N MB of the file, skipping P MB, where P equals P% of the total file size. <p>BlackCat's implementation of intermittent encryption also gives operators configuration choices in the form of various byte-skipping patterns.</p> <p>For example, the malware can encrypt only the first bytes of a file, follow a dot pattern, a percentage of file blocks, and also has an "auto" mode that combines multiple modes for a more tangled result.</p> <p>The recent emergence of the PLAY ransomware via a high-profile attack against Argentina's Judiciary of Córdoba was also backed by the rapidness of intermittent encryption.</p> <p>PLAY doesn't give configuration options, but instead, it just breaks the file into 2, 3, or 5 chunks, depending on the file size, and then encrypts every other chunk.</p> <p>Finally, Black Basta, one of the biggest names in the space at the moment, also doesn't give operators the option to pick among modes, as its strain decides what to do based on the file size.</p>

	<p>For small files below 704 bytes in size, it encrypts all content. For files between 704 bytes and 4 KB, it encrypts 64 bytes and skips 192 bytes in between.</p> <p>If the file size exceeds 4 KB, Black Basta's ransomware reduces the space size of untouched intervals to 128 bytes, while the size of the encrypted portion remains 64 bytes.</p> <p>Intermittent encryption outlook</p> <p>Intermittent encryption seems to have significant advantages and virtually no downsides, so security analysts expect more ransomware gangs to adopt this approach shortly.</p> <p>LockBit's strain is already the quickest out there in terms of encryption speeds, so if the gang adopted the partial encryption technique, the duration of its strikes would be reduced to a couple of minutes.</p> <p>Of course, encryption is a complex matter, and the implementation of intermittent encryption must be done correctly to ensure that it won't result in easy data recoveries by the victims.</p> <p>Right now, BlackCat's implementation is the most sophisticated, while that of Qyick remains unknown since malware analysts have not yet analyzed samples of the new RaaS.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/09 Leak sites targeted by DDoS attacks
SOURCE	https://www.darkreading.com/threat-intelligence/lockbit-alphv-ransomware-gang-leak-sites-ddos-attacks
GIST	<p>The ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS) groups LockBit and ALPHV (aka BlackCat), among others, have been the focus of distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks targeting their data leak sites, causing downtime and outages.</p> <p>The attacks have been monitored by Cisco Talos since Aug. 20 and include a wide range of other RaaS groups, including Quantum, LV, Hive, Everest, BianLian, Yanluowang, Snatch, and Lorenz.</p> <p>Forum posts by the LockBit gang's technical support arm, "LockBitSupp," indicate that the attacks have had a significant impact on the group's activities, with nearly 1,000 servers targeting the leak site with close to 400 requests per second, researchers said.</p> <p>"Many of the aforementioned groups are still affected by connectivity issues and continue to face a variety of intermittent outages to their data leak sites, including frequent disconnects and unreachable hosts, suggesting that this is part of a sustained effort to thwart updates to those sites," a Talos blog post explained this week.</p> <p>The groups have responded in different ways, with some sites simply redirecting web traffic elsewhere, as in the case of the Quantum group, while others have beefed up DDoS protections.</p> <p>"Given that this activity is continuing to interrupt and hinder the ability for these affiliates and operators to post new victim information publicly, we will likely continue to see various groups respond differently, depending on the resources available to them," the blog post authors noted.</p> <p>Shutdowns Offer Respite to Targeted Groups</p> <p>Aubrey Perin, lead threat intelligence analyst at Qualys, says in the case of a DDoS attack on RaaS leak sites, victims of criminal hacking gang activity would clearly benefit. Perin notes that the report showcases how effective these attacks are at halting ransomware operations, with outages allowing defenders precious time to investigate.</p> <p>"If the leak sites are shut down, the victim's infrastructure cannot be announced," Perin says. "The purpose of these types of attacks is to interrupt the gangs' activities," adding that if gangs cannot list victim information, then extortion tactics become far more difficult, and in some cases benign.</p>

However, Perin adds today's bad actors are growing increasingly sophisticated and learning from mistakes on the fly, so they may find workarounds rather quickly.

"More mature gangs have exemplified their agility to quickly re-organize and launch more sophisticated countermeasures for DDoS attacks," Perin explains. Where initial ransomware authors used "spray-and-pray" methods, Perin points out that today's bad actors carry out ransomware attacks as professional operations, with each applying their own "special sauce."

"Organizations each have their own strategies and protocols they follow, and RaaS is no different. Each gang finds [what works best, develops strategy, and executes](#)," Perin says. "Each gang's operations are unique to that of other gangs."

Thus, Perin says, without a deeper understanding of a specific gangs' operating schedule and strategy, it is next to impossible to know the real impact to their operations.

"That being said, these attacks certainly have the power to tarnish their reputations," Perin notes.

Rival Extortion Groups, Government Agencies Could Benefit

When it comes to who's behind the DDoS efforts, Rick Holland, CISO and vice president of strategy at Digital Shadows, says rival extortion crews and government agencies are two possible beneficiaries of attacks against data leak sites.

"There is no honor among thieves, and there is a history of groups targeting each other," he says. "On the government side, US Cyber Command commander General [Paul] Nakasone admitted to targeting ransomware groups last year, so it would be reasonable to assume that the US government has continued efforts to disrupt the adversaries."

Holland says extortionists need to think about their site's resilience, just like legitimate businesses.

"There are other ways for ransomware victims to interact with the actors," he explains. "RaaS representatives are available on forums, and victim negotiations can still be taken offline through various messaging applications."

Andrew Hay, COO at LARES Consulting, adds that the targeted gangs are likely actively combatting the issue.

"We'll likely see the threat groups relocate their servers and services to a more distributed infrastructure to maintain availability, just like any organization would to stay operational," he says.

From Hay's perspective, the report suggests that attacks directed at RaaS data leak sites are likely not going to fade away anytime soon, which could lead to a sort of underground competition for affiliates.

"You don't need to be the best, you just have to be better — or more available — than the other guy," he says.

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HEADLINE	09/09 US sanctions Iran for cyberattack activity
SOURCE	https://www.darkreading.com/vulnerabilities-threats/us-sanctions-iran-apt-cyberattack-activity
GIST	<p>The feds have moved to sanction the Iranian government for its cybercrime activities, which they allege have been carried out in systematic fashion against US targets via a range of advanced persistent threat (APT) groups.</p> <p>US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is specifically designating Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) for "engaging in cyber-enabled activities against the United States and its allies," since at least 2007.</p>

The sanctions mean that US citizens and visitors to the US are prohibited from doing business or carrying out any transactions involving funds, goods, or services with the designated entities or their proxies.

Albanian Cyberattack Sparks US Action

The Treasury Department cited a recent cyberattack in July that [disrupted the Albanian government](#) as emblematic of Iran's tactics; that incident resulted in the leaking of documents purported to be from the Albanian government and personal information associated with Albanian residents.

"Iran's cyberattack against Albania disregards norms of responsible peacetime State behavior in cyberspace, which includes a norm on refraining from damaging critical infrastructure that provides services to the public," Brian Nelson, undersecretary of the treasury for terrorism and financial intelligence, said [in a statement](#) on Friday. "We will not tolerate Iran's [increasingly aggressive cyber-activities](#) targeting the United States or our allies and partners."

John Hultquist, vice president at Mandiant Intelligence, notes that Iran has a history of targeting the MeK, the group at the center of the Albanian incident. "These actors have also been involved in ransomware incidents that may have been ultimately designed for disruptive purposes rather than financial gain," he says. "Those operations were a template for the Albania attack."

Calling Out MuddyWater & APT34

The sanctions also extend to Minister of Intelligence Esmail Khatib, who the Treasury Department said is responsible [for directing APT groups from within MOIS](#). The Friday announcement specifically mentions his weapon as including the [MuddyWater APT](#) (aka OilRig or APT34, specializing in espionage on rival governments) and [APT39](#) (aka Chafer, which the US says supports Iran's human rights abuses).

"MOIS carries out cyber-espionage and disruptive ransomware attacks on behalf of the Iranian government in parallel with the other Iranian security service, the IRGC," says Hultquist, who notes that Mandiant has previously linked both APTs to Tehran. "They are largely focused on classic espionage targets such as governments and dissidents, and they have been found targeting upstream sources of intelligence like telecommunications firms and companies with potentially valuable personally identifiable information (PII)."

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HEADLINE	09/09 DOH site to report home test Covid results
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/state-department-health-offers-new-way-report-positive-results-home-covid-19-test/FRWUZBCZXBAFRKKXSSBUEYQDVI/
GIST	<p>The Washington State Department of Health is offering a new way to report the results of a home COVID-19 test.</p> <p>On Friday, the department of health updated its website to allow people to click on its "Say Yes! COVID Test" digital assistant to report positive tests no matter what brand of test kit is used.</p> <p>KIRO 7 anchor Gary Horcher used the site and he said it is straightforward.</p> <p>The department of health said it is really important to keep track of the numbers and areas where COVID-19 is still spreading, so it can stay ahead of any other variants and outbreaks that might occur.</p> <p>Up until now, people were asked to report a positive case through the WA Notify app or the state COVID-19 phone hotline but the hotline has shifted to Connecting Services for people who need more support and advice after they test positive.</p> <p>Although the White House has stopped the free national testing kit delivery, you can still get 10 free kits delivered to you in Washington state every month by signing up on the "Say Yes! COVID Test" website.</p>
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Terrorism, Extremism

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HEADLINE	09/12 IS militants kill 6 US-backed Syria fighters
SOURCE	https://news.yahoo.com/militants-kill-6-us-backed-103415193.html
GIST	<p>BEIRUT (AP) — The Islamic State group killed six U.S.-backed Syrian fighters in eastern Syria saying on Monday that the killing was in retaliation for an ongoing operation inside a sprawling camp housing tens of thousands of family members of the extremist group.</p> <p>The IS-linked Amaq news agency released a video showing the shooting of the six members of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces near the eastern village of Ruwaished where they were captured alive and later shot dead late Sunday.</p> <p>Despite their defeat in Syria in 2019, when IS lost the last sliver of land its fighters once controlled, the extremists' sleeper cells have continued to carry out deadly attacks in Syria and Iraq where they once held large parts of the two countries.</p> <p>The latest attack occurred in Syria's eastern province of Deir el-Zour bordering Iraq, and where U.S. troops are based at an oil facility known as the Omar Field.</p> <p>Last week, the U.S. military said SDF fighters arrested dozens of IS militants and rescued four women who were being held chained inside tents at the massive al-Hol camp that houses IS families.</p> <p>The operation that has been ongoing for three weeks is part of an effort to dissolve a major IS network at the camp, which is widely seen as a breeding ground for the next generation of IS extremists.</p> <p>The al-Hol camp in Syria's northeastern Hassakeh Province, has long been viewed as a growing problem and there have been a number of military operations and raids there to root out IS threats.</p> <p>Some 50,000 Syrians and Iraqis are crowded into tents in the fenced-in camp. Nearly 20,000 of them are children; most of the rest are women, the wives and widows of IS fighters. In a separate, heavily guarded section of the camp known as the annex are an additional 2,000 women from 57 other countries — they are considered the most die-hard IS supporters — along with their children, numbering about 8,000.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 DHS: emerging threat domestic extremism
SOURCE	https://www.axios.com/2022/09/12/dhs-chief-domestic-extremism-threat-evolved-since-9-11
GIST	<p>Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas told MSNBC on Sunday the "threat landscape" has evolved in the 21 years since the 9/11 attacks from concerns about foreign terrorists to domestic extremists.</p> <p>What he's saying: "Back when 9/11 occurred, in those years we were very focused on the foreign terrorist, the individual who sought to do a severe harm to enter the United States and do us harm," Mayorkas said in his interview with MSNBC's Jonathan Capehart.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "It's then evolved, we began to be more and more concerned about the individuals already resident in the United States radicalized by a foreign terrorist ideology," Mayorkas continued. "Now we are seeing an emerging threat ... over the last several years of the domestic violent extremist," he added. "The individual here in the United States radicalized to violence by a foreign terrorist ideology, but also an ideology of hate, anti-government sentiment, false narratives propagated on online platforms, even personal grievances."

The big picture: [Mayorkas pledged](#) to make tackling domestic violent extremism a "National Priority Area" following the Jan. 6, 2021 [Capitol insurrection](#) and announced last year the [DHS was directing](#) \$77 million to state and local authorities to combat the rising problem.

- The Department of Justice [opened a unit](#) to investigate acts of domestic terrorism earlier this year after the DOJ and [FBI reported](#) that the threat of and investigations into acts of domestic terrorism had [risen since 2020](#).

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Go deeper: [Federal officials release guide to identify U.S.-based violent extremists](#)

HEADLINE	09/12 Post-9/11 terror threat landscape?
SOURCE	https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2022-september-12/
GIST	<p>Bottom Line Up Front</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The threat posed to the U.S. homeland by groups like al-Qaeda and the Islamic State has been reduced significantly, yet these organizations, their affiliates, and the ideology of Salafi-jihadism itself are still capable of inspiring homegrown violent extremists in the West.• The late July killing of al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in a drone strike in Kabul, Afghanistan, may seem like the logical bookend to what has been a defining threat, but his death does not signal the end of al-Qaeda.• Twenty-one years after the 9/11 attacks, the terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland is remarkably more diverse and includes not only Salafi-jihadists but also violent far-right extremists, conspiracy theorists, and a host of anti-government agitators and domestic terrorists.• What used to be a fairly consistent and homogenous threat from Sunni jihadists, has given way to a variegated attack matrix, the most defining feature of which is the broad range of ideologies motivating violence. <p>Following yesterday's twenty-one-year anniversary of al-Qaeda's September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, it is worth reflecting on the nature of the current threat and how it has evolved over time. The threat posed to the U.S. homeland by Salafi-jihadi groups like al-Qaeda and Islamic State has been reduced significantly. However, both of these organizations, as well as their affiliates, and the ideology of Salafi-jihadism itself, are still capable of inspiring homegrown violent extremists in the West. After twenty years of the U.S.'s Global War on Terror, the leadership and upper echelon of al-Qaeda and IS have been successively winnowed down. Aggressive armed drone campaigns and improvements in homeland security have blunted the impact of large, bureaucratized terrorist organizations. In an effort to adapt, these organizations have shifted to an affiliate or franchise model, where regional branches pursue a blend of local and global objectives. Some of these branches, including many throughout sub-Saharan Africa, have vastly improved their capabilities and could seek to target the West as their priorities evolve.</p> <p>The late July killing of al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in a drone strike in Kabul, Afghanistan, may seem like the logical bookend to what has been a defining threat. But Zawahiri's death does not signal the end of al-Qaeda, and with the Taliban in control of most of the territory in Afghanistan, there is a high likelihood that the country will remain a safe haven for transnational terrorist groups, including al-Qaeda. Afghanistan is also home to one of the Islamic State's most potent affiliates, Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K), a group that recently conducted a suicide attack targeting the Russian embassy in Kabul. There are concerns within the U.S. intelligence community that IS-K could develop the capabilities to attack U.S. interests around the globe.</p> <p>Yet more comprehensively, the terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland is remarkably more diverse than at any point over the previous two decades. It now includes not only Salafi-jihadists but also violent far-right extremists, conspiracy theorists, and a host of anti-government agitators and domestic terrorists. The threat from the far-right emanates from organizations and groups, including The Base and the Atomwaffen Division (also known as National Socialist Order), on the one hand, and the Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, and Three Percenters, on the other. These organizations are representative of the threat posed by groups organic to the United States. There is also a far-right ecosystem, fueled by virulent racist propaganda, conspiracies, and disinformation, that inspire lone actor attacks, like those in El Paso, TX; Pittsburgh, PA;</p>

and [Buffalo, NY](#), to name just a few. The [Capitol Insurrection](#) of January 6, 2021, is further emblematic of the threat.

What was mostly a monochromatic threat from Salafi-jihadist groups and those individuals they sought to inspire, has become a [kaleidoscope](#) with new threats from white supremacists and neo-Nazis, shadowy anarchist elements, neo-Luddites, and the extreme fringe of violent incels—politicized involuntary celibates fueled by misogyny. Popular theories like accelerationism, whose proponents believe in the complete destruction of current systems of government, appeal to individuals that claim allegiance to movements on both the far-left and the far-right. Newer extremist groups, including the [Boogaloo Bois](#), are a byproduct of this trend, as it remains difficult to place them squarely on the ideological spectrum. The COVID-19 pandemic has also broadened the tent, drawing in anti-vaxxers and those opposed to government measures to stem the spread of the coronavirus.

FBI Director Christopher Wray has also warned about a phenomenon sometimes referred to as [“salad bar” ideology](#) because it provides extremists with options similar to a buffet. This means extremists are borrowing from numerous, and at times seemingly contradictory, ideological foundations. Whatever one labels the phenomenon, what it tells us is that today’s extremists are more comfortable ‘mixing and matching’ distinct strands of broader ideologies. In one week in August in the United States, four Muslim-Americans were targeted and murdered in an anti-Shia motivated attack, a far-right extremist attacked an [FBI office](#) in Cincinnati, Ohio, and famous author Salman Rushdie was stabbed by an American citizen who was inspired by the Iranian regime and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). What used to be a fairly consistent and homogenous threat from Sunni jihadists, has given way to a variegated attack matrix, the most defining feature of which is the broad range of ideologies motivating violence.

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HEADLINE	09/11 AQ mastermind 9/11 attacks still awaits trial
SOURCE	https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/us-news/khalid-sheikh-mohammed-al-qaeda-terrorist-and-mastermind-of-9-11-attacks-still-awaits-trial-articleshow.html
GIST	<p>The September 11 attacks, commonly known as 9/11, have completed 21 years on Sunday, with people still grieving the death of their dear ones and thousands experiencing hazardous health issues. The ill-fated day that witnessed three back-to-back commercial plane attacks left nearly 3,000 dead and more than 10,000 suffering fatal injuries. Despite a two-decade-long trial, the kin of the victims is still waiting for justice as the mastermind behind the attack is still not penalised in accordance with his crime. The trial of al-Qaeda terrorist Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the ‘principal architect’ of the attacks, and four other alleged conspirators is still not completed, amid the fact that the country witnessed four Presidential elections.</p> <p>Who is Khalid Sheikh Mohammed?</p> <p>According to the records published by an American intelligence agency (CIA), Mohammed was probably born either in 1964 or a year later in a Pakistani family. Official records claim his birthplace as Kuwait as his parents migrated to the gulf nation during the 1960s. The major turn of his life was considered as the year 1982 after he heard a speech by an exiled Afghan politician and former mujahideen commander, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf. The CIA said the speech included a strong call for "jihad" against the Soviets. He joined the Muslim Brotherhood -- a Sunni Islamist religious group in which extreme ideas and beliefs have been widely shared by Islamic scholars.</p> <p>9/11 terror mastermind got education from the US</p> <p>After completing his graduation from high school, he moved to the United States and was admitted to Chowan University in Murfreesboro, North Carolina. Later, he transferred to North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University and received a Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering in 1986. According to documents, the 20-year-old Mohammed then travelled to Peshawar where he met his brothers and joined the extremist groups who were engaged in the Soviet-Afghan war. In the meantime, he received a master's degree in Islamic Culture and History through correspondence classes from Punjab University in Pakistan in 1992. Later, at the age of 28, he got married and moved to Qatar with his family. There, he worked as a project engineer with the Qatari Ministry of Electricity and Water. As he earned a handsome salary from his job and funding from some extremist groups, he travelled to several countries.</p>

READ | [How hijackers planned 9/11 attacks on America's financial capital which killed 3000 people](#)

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was also involved in the 1993 WTC bombing

His name first appeared on the list of the intelligence agency after an investigation revealed he had transferred money to one of the accused of the 1993 World Trade Center bombings. Later, his name appeared as a co-conspirator of Operation Bojinka in 1995. In the plan, his main role was to plot attacks on multiple international airliners. He worked with Ahmed Yousef, the mastermind of the 1993 WTC bombing. Luckily, plans failed after a major fire broke out in the same building where they were working collaboratively to blow airlines. The report said he used to stay in luxurious hotels and used to enjoy night parties in clubs in Manila. In 1998, he officially joined Al-Qaeda and started plotting major attacks on America.

READ | [US marks 21st anniversary of 9/11 terror attacks](#)

Execution of 9/11 terror attacks

According to CIA documents, Flight 93, was scheduled from New Jersey to San Francisco, California with 33 passengers and seven crew members on board. Initially, the flight was delayed due to flight traffic, but later, it took off with hijackers. After completing the 40-minute journey, the hijackers announced their plan. Desperate passengers and crew members contacted their family members on the ground and narrated the scenario. According to Diaro AS -- an online publication--, the husband of one of the flight attendants on board remembers hearing, "everyone is running to first class." It's understood that while the passengers tried to enter the cockpit, the hijackers chose to crash the plane into a rural field in Pennsylvania.

READ | [Jill Biden shares memories of 9/11 as wife, sister, more](#)

Another American aeroplane -- Flight 11-- took off from Los Angeles with 76 passengers, 11 crew members, and five additional hijackers at 7:59 ET. The flight crashed into the Twin Towers at 8:46 ET. On the other hand, Flight 175, which was headed to Los Angeles from Logan Airport at 8:14 ET, crashed into the South Tower. Meanwhile, Flight 77 took off for Los Angeles International Airport from Washington Dulles International Airport at 8:20 ET but the hijackers crashed into the West wall of the Pentagon. This resulted in the killing of 3996 people, including 350 firefighters.

READ | [Joe Biden extends 9/11 emergency; warns 'terrorist threat of attack continues'](#)

Victims of US terror attacks still waiting for justice

Subsequently, after two years, he was arrested in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. He confessed that he was involved in the 9/11 attacks. "I was responsible for the 9/11 operation, from A to Z," the CIA quoted Mohammed as saying. Later, he was shifted to multiple "secret" locations. In September 2006, the American government announced it had moved Mohammed from a secret CIA prison to military custody at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp. Since then, he has been facing prison.

READ | [FBI publicly releases selective declassified documents related to September 11 attacks](#)

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HEADLINE	09/11 Attack plots against critical infrastructure
SOURCE	https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/mayhem-murder-and-misdirection-violent-extremist-attack-plots-against-critical-infrastructure-in-the-united-states-2016-2022/
GIST	<p>In the United States, critical infrastructure, or “assets, systems, and networks, whether physical or virtual, [that] are considered so vital to the United States that their incapacitation or destruction would have a debilitating effect on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination thereof,” are prime targets in violent extremist attack plots. While a variety of violent extremist movements have attempted to assault American critical infrastructure throughout modern history, the Department of Homeland Security and other national security authorities have recently sounded the alarm that U.S.-based violent extremists have developed “credible, specific plans” to attack critical infrastructure.</p> <p>To understand the current dimensions of this threat, this paper reviews 94 cases of individuals charged in the U.S. federal court system from 2016 to 2022 with planning to conduct violent extremist attacks, 35 of whom attempted to attack critical infrastructure systems. 19 of these cases are associated with the Salafi-</p>

	<p>jihadist movement; 16 are associated with white supremacist groups. Evaluating these cases, the report finds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salafi-jihadist attack planners were significantly more likely to consider critical infrastructure systems as targets for attack than their white supremacist counterparts. • Salafi-jihadist and white supremacist attack planners attempted to target different critical infrastructure sectors, with the former focusing on the commercial facilities, government facilities, and emergency services sectors, and the latter predominantly focusing on the energy sector. • Since 2019, white supremacist attacks plots against critical infrastructure systems have distinctly increased. • Between 2016 and 2022, white supremacist plots targeting energy systems dramatically increased in frequency. 13 individuals associated with the movement were arrested and charged in federal court with planning attacks on the energy sector; 11 of these attack planners were charged after 2020. • The rise of accelerationist ideology and doctrine during the past decade likely fueled the increased risk of attack plots within white supremacist milieus targeting critical infrastructure, and the energy sector in particular.
Return to Top	Read the report at GWU's Program on Extremism

HEADLINE	09/11 Seattle FD, PD raise flag to remember 9/11
SOURCE	https://www.q13fox.com/news/never-forget-seattle-fire-police-raise-flag-to-remember-9-11
GIST	<p>SEATTLE - Sunday marks 21 years since the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, taking nearly 3,000 lives.</p> <p>Firefighters and law enforcement officers in Seattle paid their respects by raising the U.S. flag atop the Space Needle.</p> <p>"On this day every year, we remember not only their sacrifice, but the dedication of all people – SPD officers included – who put the needs and lives of the public before their own, every day, while on the job," wrote the Seattle Police Department in a Facebook post.</p> <p>Officers raised the flag, then lowered it to half-staff to honor the lives lost.</p> <p>"Please take time out of your day today to have a moment of silence in honor of all who lost their lives on 9/11 and as a result of that day, and for all of the families whose lives were impacted by this tragedy," wrote the Fire Department.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Forensic teams still work to ID 9/11 victims
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/US/forensic-investigators-work-give-911-families-peace-id/story?id=89587955
GIST	<p>Twenty-one years after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the families who lost loved ones at the World Trade Center and are still seeking to hold them one last time.</p> <p>For these families, who have yet to receive any remains of their loved ones, the closest they can get is a special section of the National September 11 Memorial & Museum located at what was once the foundation of the north tower of the World Trade Center.</p> <p>There, behind a blue wall with the message "No day shall erase you from the memory of time," lies the remains of unidentified victims, along with a room that only victims' families can access to pay their respects. It includes a window that looks on the rows of cabinets that contain the remains.</p> <p>"It's designed in a way that if some families aren't ready, they can still be close to the remains but not actually view in," Jennifer Odien, a World Trade Center Center anthropologist at the New York City Office of Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), told ABC News' "Start Here."</p>

While the museum's repository serves as a somber memorial ground for those families that have no physical proof that their loved ones perished on 9/11, the forensic team at OCME has been testing samples of those remains to try to make positive identifications in their own lab in Manhattan.

And even though the team said the task has been daunting for 21 years and counting due to the sheer scope of work, they are still determined to give these families closure.

There were 2,753 people killed at the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001. The victims include passengers on American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175, first responders and people who worked in the towers. The bodies of the victims were so badly degraded by the explosion and collapse of the towers that remains were still being found as late as 2006, according to OCME.

As of Sept. 1, 1,647, roughly 60%, of the total number of victims, have been identified, according to OCME. The last two recent identifications [were made last year](#). There are 1,106 victims who remain unidentified.

Mark Desire, the assistant director of OCME's department of forensic biology, told "Start Here" that he went straight to the World Trade Center when the attacks happened and escaped its collapse. The next day he and his team went back to their labs to begin their work assessing the deaths.

"We were beat up and bruised, but this was the biggest thing we had ever seen. There was no way it was going to keep us away," he said.

Desire said the heat, fire, jet fuel, water, sunlight, mold and bacteria present following the attacks has left many of the remains extremely fragile for analysis so his team has had to grind up tiny pieces of bone to extract DNA.

"Some of these fragments are so small, you get one shot," he said.

One of the struggles that Desire said his team has had to face is communicating with the families who are waiting for confirmations that remains have matched a loved one.

Every year, the forensics team meets with families on Sept. 10 to give them an update.

"It's been 21 years. You know, [the parents are] getting up there in age, and when we meet with them they ask if we can promise that...we make sure that the remains get to because all these parents want to do is hold their child again before they die," he said.

Even on the occasions when the OCME team is successful and report their findings to a family, emotions are still strong, according to Desire.

Carl Gajewski, a DNA lab supervisor at OCME, recalled an instance when the team revealed they made an identification of a man who died on 9/11 just as his family had traveled to New York from overseas. The forensics team delivered the news in person through an interpreter.

"You see the interpreter's face, because she realizes in that moment what she's, what's happening," he told "Start Here." "There was just this visceral release of energy from the mother and father. I think it was like a shockwave that went through us all. I'll never forget it. And in the end, we were all like crying and hugging and they were hugging us. And that's a moment I'll never forget in my life."

Desire said the office has upgraded its tools and resources with the latest technology and has worked with other scientists around the world to help reach their goal.

And even if his team identifies the hundreds of remains still unaccounted for, Desire acknowledged that no amount of science can ever fill the void that was left behind in the families' hearts.

	"We provide answers. We provide here's something physical that you're now able to have a whatever kind of ceremony, reflection, whatever you choose. It's our job. Our job is, our job isn't to bring closure. That's up to the family to decide," he said.
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HEADLINE	09/11 Taliban: US Blackhawk crashes, kills 3
SOURCE	https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11201359/US-Black-Hawk-helicopter-crashes-Kabul-Taliban-training-exercise-killing-three.html
GIST	<p>Three people have been killed and five injured after a Black Hawk helicopter crashed during a Taliban training exercise in Afghanistan.</p> <p>The chopper crashed in Kabul due to a 'technical problem,' the group's defence ministry said on Saturday. Video of the crash shows the helicopter seemingly nose-dive before it hit the ground.</p> <p>Other footage shared on Twitter showed a cloud of smoke billowing around the alleged crash site.</p> <p>The crash comes as three civilians were injured when a bicycle bomb exploded in the capital city. The incidents are not believed to be connected.</p> <p>Enayatullah Khwarizmi, spokesman for Afghanistan's Ministry of Defence, confirmed the crash, saying: 'An American Black Hawk helicopter, which was flown ... for training, crashed due to a technical problem inside the campus of the National Defence University.'</p> <p>The Taliban took control of some American-made aircraft after they seized the country in mid-August last year. It remains unclear how many are operational.</p> <p>US forces deliberately damaged some military hardware as they left and Afghan forces had flown some helicopters to central Asian nations, including Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.</p> <p>Afghan air force pilots and their US counterparts played a key role in the 20-year war against Taliban insurgents.</p> <p>The pilots led airstrikes that inflicted heavy casualties among Taliban troops and drove them from positions that the group had seized in various parts of the country.</p> <p>Dozens of pilots fled the country as the US-backed Afghan government collapsed just over a year ago.</p> <p>Separately, Kabul police spokesman Khalid Zadran told The Associated Press on Saturday that three people were injured when a bicycle bomb exploded in the Shai neighbourhood.</p> <p>No one immediately took responsibility for the blast. However the Islamic State (IS) has recently claimed similar attack in Afghanistan.</p> <p>The extremist group has reportedly waged a 'bloody campaign of attacks' on Taliban targets and minority groups.</p> <p>IS has been particularly targeting the Shiites whom they consider to be heretics.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Ceremonies commemorate events of Sep 11
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/9-11-ceremonies-honor-victims-21-years-after-terrorist-attacks-11662888601?mod=hp_lead_pos9

Ceremonies commemorating the [events of Sept. 11, 2001](#), were held in lower Manhattan, Shanksville, Pa., and at the Pentagon in Arlington, Va., on Sunday, the 21st anniversary of the attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people.

In New York, the families of victims gathered for a ceremony inside the 9/11 Memorial plaza in lower Manhattan. The annual reading of the victims' names paused for a moment of silence at six points, marking when each aircraft crashed in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, and when [the World Trade Center towers fell](#).

President Biden attended the memorial service at the Pentagon in Arlington, Va., which was struck at 9:37 a.m. by a hijacked American Airlines flight in 2001.

Under a cool, drizzling rain, he paused at the large wreath in front of the podium, then touched his hand to his heart as he stepped away to take a seat for the reading of the victims' names.

"To all the families and loved ones who still feel the ache, that missing piece of your soul, I'm honored to be here with you once more to share this solemn rite of remembrance and reflect on all that was lost in the fire and ash on that terrible September morning, and all that we found in ourselves to respond," Mr. Biden said, when it was his turn to speak.

He added: "The American story, the American story itself, changed that day. But what we will not change, what we cannot change, and never will, is the character of this nation that the terrorists thought they could wound."

In his remarks, Mr. Biden mentioned Queen Elizabeth II, who died on Thursday at the age of 96, and the message of support the British monarch sent to those who lost a loved one on 9/11.

"Her ambassador read a prayer of service at St. Thomas Church in New York, where she poignantly reminded us, quote, 'Grief is the price we pay for love,'" Mr. Biden said. "And on this day, when the price feels so great, Jill and I are holding all of you close to our hearts."

First lady Jill Biden traveled to Shanksville, Pa., to speak at the Flight 93 National Memorial commemoration. That hijacked United flight crashed at 10:03 a.m. in a field about 80 miles southeast of Pittsburgh after passengers tried to regain control of the plane.

Accompanied by her sister Bonny Jacobs, a United Airlines flight attendant, Dr. Biden paid special tribute in her remarks to members of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA.

"Americans see your dedication and we are grateful for it," the First Lady said.

Vice President [Kamala Harris](#) and her husband attended the memorial service in New York.

Ms. Harris stood alongside former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Mayor Eric Adams and Gov. Kathy Hochul as the names of 9/11 victims were read aloud amid tears and emotional pleas from some family members to "never forget."

The events of the day were relatively subdued compared with those of a year ago, [the attacks' 20th anniversary](#), when several former presidents and former elected officials from New York and New Jersey attended ceremonies.

On Sunday, moments of silence were held at 8:46 a.m., to mark the time the first plane hit the North Tower, and at 9:03 a.m., when the second plane hit the South Tower. The ceremony paused to note the time of the Pentagon and Shanksville crashes, and the collapse of the World Trade Center towers.

	<p>Most of the 9/11 Memorial & Museum was closed to the public on Sunday. The museum was accessible only to family members of 9/11 victims. The memorial plaza was closed for the commemoration ceremony until 3 p.m., at which point it was to reopen for visitors.</p> <p>The annual Tribute in Light also returned for the 21st commemoration ceremonies, beaming two powerful lights into the night sky from lower Manhattan to evoke the shape and location of the Twin Towers.</p>
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Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	09/11 Navy rejects releasing UFO videos
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/navy-foia-ufo/2022/09/11/id/1086957/
GIST	<p>A rejected Freedom of Information Act request (FOIA) reveals the U.S. Navy has more unreleased footage of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP) – commonly known as UFOs — and the Navy is holding out against a release because it would "harm national security," according to reports.</p> <p>Government watchdog The Black Vault was denied in its April 2020 FOIA request.</p> <p>"The release of this information will harm national security as it may provide adversaries valuable information regarding Department of Defense/Navy operations, vulnerabilities, and/or capabilities," Navy FOIA office Deputy Director Gregory Cason wrote in response to the FOIA, Live Science reported. "No portions of the videos can be segregated for release."</p> <p>Cason noted the previously declassified UAP videos in April 2020 were released because they had already been leaked to the media and "discussed extensively in the public domain," so the Navy determined they could be released "without further damage to national security," he wrote.</p> <p>Reports note the Navy's response ostensibly confirmed the existence of further UAP video, because it did not issue the usual "GLOMAR" — which is to neither confirm nor deny.</p> <p>"While three UAP videos were released in the past, the facts specific to those three videos are unique in that those videos were initially released via unofficial channels before official release," the Navy response read, Vice reported. "Those events were discussed extensively in the public domain; in fact, major news outlets conducted specials on these events. Given the amount of information in the public domain regarding these encounters, it was possible to release the files without further damage to national security."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/10 Europe suffers hottest summer on record
SOURCE	https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/climate-security/europe-suffers-hottest-summer-on-record/
GIST	<p>Europe has just suffered its hottest summer on record, according to data compiled by The Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S).</p> <p>C3S is implemented by the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts on behalf of the European Commission with funding from the EU, and routinely publishes monthly climate bulletins reporting on the changes observed in global surface air temperature, sea ice cover and hydrological variables.</p> <p>Extreme temperatures and dry conditions exacerbated air pollution and led to drought and wildfires across the continent.</p> <p>August 2022 surface air temperature: Globally, the average August 2022 temperature was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.3°C higher than the 1991-2020 average for the month, joint third warmest August on record

- similar to the values for August 2017 and 2021 and within about 0.1°C of the higher values reached in August 2016 and 2019

The average temperature over Europe in 2022 was:

- the highest on record for both August and summer (June – August) by substantial margins of 0.8°C over 2018 for August and 0.4°C over 2021 for summer
- European temperatures were most above average in the east of the continent in August, but were still well above average in the south-west, where they had been high also in June and July
- Heatwaves were prevalent in this part of Europe and over central and eastern China for all three summer months. North America also experienced one of its warmest summers

August 2022 – Hydrological conditions:

- August 2022 was generally much drier than average in much of western and parts of eastern Europe.
- Conversely, it was wetter-than average over most of Scandinavia and parts of southern and southeastern Europe. Southern regions were hit by a “derecho” storm, with extreme winds and rainfall.
- Conditions were also wetter than average in many extratropical regions of North America and Asia: in many locations heavy precipitation triggered floods and inundations. Pakistan saw particularly severe conditions with record breaking rainfall.
- Among the drier-than-average extratropical regions, parts of China experienced severe drought.

Boreal summer 2022 – Hydrological conditions:

- The summer 2022 was characterized by hot and dry conditions over much of western Europe. In much of Scandinavia, regions of central and south-eastern Europe, Greece and western Turkey, conditions were predominantly wetter than average.
- In boreal summer 2022, it was drier than average in central North and South America and across central Asia. The Horn of Africa continued to experience drought. Conditions were predominantly wetter-than-average in south Asia, particularly in Pakistan, in eastern Australia and in most of southern Africa.

Senior Scientist for the Copernicus Climate Change Service, Freja Vamborg, states: “An intense series of heatwaves across Europe paired with unusually dry conditions, have led to a summer of extremes with records in terms of temperature, drought and fire activity in many parts of Europe, affecting society and nature in various ways. The Copernicus Climate Change Service data shows that we’ve not only had record August temperatures for Europe but also for summer, with the previous summer record only being one year old.”

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[Read more at Copernicus](#)

HEADLINE	09/10 AAA: don't wipe wildfire ash off car
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/wildfire/how-to-get-ash-off-car/281-2f5728b0-d065-4129-98b0-415694c7dc14
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Ash is beginning to fall in parts of western Washington as wildfires break out near White Pass and Stevens Pass.</p> <p>Wiping or rinsing wildfire ash off your vehicle can release harmful chemicals and cause paint damage. Instead, you should thoroughly wash your vehicle with soap and water.</p> <p>According to AAA, if conditions are dry, you should brush ash off with a long-handled duster, instead of wiping or blowing it off using an air duster.</p> <p>If washing your vehicle at home, wet thoroughly and wash with warm water, a soft mitt, towel or sponge, and formulated car wash soap. Start at the roof and work your way down and around the panels. Make sure to rinse your vehicle thoroughly and dry it with a soft clean towel.</p>

	<p>AAA said it is important to remove ash from your car as soon as possible. It may take several days and several washes since ash will continue to fall depending on conditions.</p> <p>Twitter users began sharing where they have been seeing ash Saturday morning, including Everett and Bothell.</p>
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Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	09/11 Colorado officer killed during response
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/11/us/arvada-colorado-police-officer-killed/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)An Arvada, Colorado, police officer was killed while responding to a disturbance early Sunday, Police Chief Link Strate said.</p> <p>Dillon Michael Vakoff, 27, was "killed serving his community," Arvada police said.</p> <p>Vakoff and another officer responded to a scene with a "large family disturbance," Strate said at a news conference, and the two "arrived to a chaotic scene with multiple people in the street."</p> <p>"The initial two officers tried to separate several belligerent and uncooperative individuals when the suspect began to fire and shot a female victim," Strate said. Gunfire between a suspect and police ensued, and both Vakoff and the suspect were shot.</p> <p>The other officer on the scene tried to help Vakoff but was ultimately unsuccessful. Vakoff was transported to a hospital where he later died.</p> <p>The suspect was transported to a hospital where he remains in police custody and is expected to survive, Strate said.</p> <p>The female victim was also transported to a hospital and is expected to survive, police added. Her involvement in the incident is unknown at this time, he said.</p> <p>"This is an ongoing active investigation and the information we have at this time is preliminary," Strate said. "But in an effort to be transparent with our community, we wanted to provide you with some details from this morning's incident and line of duty-death."</p> <p>Strate said Vakoff had been with the department since 2019 and was a former staff sergeant in the US Air Force.</p> <p>He was, Chief Strate said, "an example of everything that is good about a police officer. He was training towards becoming a SWAT officer, and without a doubt, would have continued to have a positive impact on his community."</p> <p>"This is a tragic loss to this community, to this department, but most significantly to his family and loved ones," Strate said. "His service and sacrifice will never be forgotten."</p> <p>Arvada, Colorado, is roughly 10 miles northwest of Denver.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 No air conditioning in many prisons
SOURCE	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2022/09/12/prisons-air-conditioning-climate-change-heat-waves/10158499002/

It was nearly 100 degrees outside in South Texas the day Quintero Jones died. Inside his cinder-block prison cell in the middle of summer, it felt even hotter.

Jones, 37, was asthmatic and had high blood pressure, and like many incarcerated people, he was taking medications that can affect sensitivity to heat.

The day he died in July 2015, Jones was lying on the floor of his cell to "stay away from the baking hot cinder-block walls" when he had an asthma attack exacerbated by the heat, according to a lawsuit filed by his family. His emergency inhaler had been taken earlier that day during a search, and his unit was on lockdown.

"He's dying!" Jones' cellmate yelled, while other inmates tried to get the attention of officers, the lawsuit says. It took up to 20 minutes for someone to check on Jones, who was "hunched over" and "gasping for air," the suit claimed. Staff brought him outside his cell, where he began vomiting and collapsed. Staff performed CPR for 24 minutes before he was transported to a hospital and pronounced dead.

Some things have changed in Texas prisons since Jones' death. The state has added more than 3,500 air-conditioned beds over the past three to four years, and it has plans to add nearly 6,000 more.

But only about 30% of the roughly 100 prison facilities in Texas are fully air-conditioned, according to a [report](#) released in July by the Texas A&M University Hazard Reduction and Recovery Center and Texas Prisons Community Activists.

And Texas is far from alone. At least 44 U.S. states, including those with some of the highest temperatures nationally, don't have universal air conditioning in their prisons, according to a USA TODAY analysis of media reports and information from state corrections departments. The [analysis is the most comprehensive data available](#) about cooling systems in U.S. state prisons, as the information isn't tracked.

With scientists and studies chronicling the intense impacts climate change is having in fueling hotter temperatures across the country, advocates for incarcerated people are sounding the alarm about sweltering conditions in U.S. prisons, where current infrastructure is ill-equipped for a problem on track to worsen.

Advocates say the hot conditions in prisons may constitute "cruel and unusual punishment" prohibited by the Eighth Amendment.

David Fathi, the director of the ACLU's National Prison Project, said people should consider the question of values: "Whether we as society find it acceptable to torture incarcerated people and to expose them to conditions that we know are going to kill at least a few of them and are going to cause serious injury to some additional people."

No air conditioning in many US prisons

Only four of Alabama's 26 state correctional facilities have air conditioning in all dormitories, in a state where it regularly reaches the mid-90s outside in the summer, [reported](#) the Montgomery Advertiser, part of the USA TODAY Network. And just 24% of hot, humid Florida's state-run prison housing units are air-conditioned, said Molly Best, a Florida Department of Corrections spokesperson.

USA TODAY reviewed media reports and public information from all 50 states and contacted corrections departments where information was unavailable. The results showed [at least 44 states don't universally air condition their prisons](#).

Only one state – Tennessee – said its prisons were fully air-conditioned. A handful of other states had nearly universal air conditioning or used other cooling methods to control the temperature in all areas of their facilities.

A 2019 review by the nonprofit criminal justice research organization [Prison Policy Initiative](#) found prisons in 13 of the country's hottest states – mostly in the South – including Kansas,

Louisiana, [Virginia](#) and North Carolina, aren't fully air-conditioned. USA TODAY found a slew of other states representing all regions of the country that didn't have full air conditioning in their facilities.

Two states, Alaska and Montana, had no air conditioning in any of their prisons.

"Our climate just really doesn't call for it," said Betsy Holley, a spokesperson from the Alaska Department of Corrections.

While some states aren't typically known for oppressive heat, experts say they should be prepared for the realities of a changing climate.

"This is going to be an issue in virtually every part of the country," Fathi said.

In Michigan, the most medically vulnerable and mentally ill prisoners are housed with air conditioning. Other inmates have chilled air, ventilation systems or fans, said Chris Gautz, a spokesperson for the state's corrections department.

"There is no law requiring the department to provide air conditioning for prisoners, just as there is no law requiring members of the public to have air conditioning in their homes," Gautz said.

Climate change set to make prisons even hotter

Climate change is on track to make it unbearably hot in prisons across the country, not just the South, where advocacy efforts have traditionally focused, experts say.

This summer, intense and unexpected heat waves in the Northeast and the Pacific Northwest caused heat-related deaths. Nearly 6,000 high-temperature records were broken this July, and millions of Americans were under excessive-heat warnings from the Southern Plains to New England as heat domes blanketed the country.

"When we think about how climate change is going to continue to affect people who are incarcerated, we will also be thinking about the places that haven't historically acclimated to the heat," said [Julie Skarha](#), a researcher with the Brown University Department of Epidemiology. "They're going to be even more at risk without that infrastructure and the resources."

What happens when temperatures get too high

The summer of 2015, when Jones died, temperatures reached 100 degrees on five days in Beeville, Texas, where he was incarcerated, according to historical weather data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The high was 98 degrees the day Jones died, data shows. This summer, temperatures hit 100 degrees on 15 days there, and most prisoners currently in his former unit still don't have air-conditioned housing.

The lawsuit brought by Jones' family was settled by officials at the Texas Department of Correctional Justice for at least \$80,000, according to federal court records. He was serving a life sentence for capital murder when he died.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice notes that heat exhaustion can be felt beginning at 80 degrees, with the risk for heat stroke beginning at around 91 degrees, according to the Texas A&M study, which found temperatures inside correctional units in the state regularly reach 110 degrees. At least one unit has topped 149 degrees, the study says.

"It's torture. ... The level of the heat inside of these facilities is such that it's difficult to breathe, it's difficult to move," said Texas state Rep. Terry Canales, a Democrat and longtime advocate for cooling prisons.

Dying from heat is a common fear among inmates, according to the Texas study. The report detailed the impacts of high temperatures and analyzed survey responses from over 300 inmates on their experiences between 2018 and 2020.

"I feel like I'm going to die right here in this cell or have one hell of a heat stroke... They don't care if I die in here or not," one survey respondent wrote. Respondents were kept anonymous in the report to protect them from retaliation, said Amite Dominick, who co-authored the report.

New Jersey's corrections watchdog released an oversight [report](#) last week, finding temperatures inside cells got as high as 88 degrees in July and hit 94 degrees in August during site visits.

The watchdog office "heard reports of people engaging in assaultive behavior in order to be transferred to air-conditioned disciplinary housing assignments," the report said.

Overcrowding in prisons adds to the problem: more bodies, more heat, said [Daniel Holt](#), a researcher on heat in U.S. jails and prisons.

"The more dense your indoor population is, the more difficult it gets when you have high temperatures, high humidity," he said.

Many prison facilities, particularly older ones, simply weren't built with temperature control and efficiency in mind. Prison administrators are more focused on safety, Holt said: "Climate is just sort of outside their wheelhouse."

'Piecemeal approaches' don't replace AC

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice told USA TODAY in a statement that its policies to help mitigate heat in prisons include increased access to water and ice, fans and cool "respite" areas prisoners can go to.

The department said many of the state's facilities were built before air conditioning was commonly installed, and prisons built in the '80s and '90s didn't have AC because of the cost to install and maintain it. [The state has estimated](#) it would cost \$1 billion to convert facilities to include air conditioning, and another \$140 million each year for maintenance, though some advocates for the incarcerated say those figures are an overestimate.

Amanda Hernandez, a spokesperson for the department, said current measures within prisons are working, citing that there have been no deaths from heat this summer in its facilities. But 12 inmates "required medical care beyond first aid" due to a heat injury this summer as of late August, Hernandez added.

"Each summer, we continue to refine and improve our practices," Hernandez said in the statement. "What has not changed is our commitment to do all that we can to keep staff and inmates safe."

But with more than 100,000 inmates in the Texas prison system and [staffing shortages](#), the strategies are "inefficient and ineffective," the Texas study authors wrote.

"Their mitigating factors don't work here. They do not have enough employees, first and foremost," Dominick said.

Inmates who responded to the survey reported inconsistent access to water and ice. Sixty-one percent said they didn't have access to additional cool-down showers. Many reported being denied access to respite areas due to overcrowding or lack of staff, or only being allowed to go once per day for only a few minutes.

"These are just piecemeal approaches," said Jamelia Morgan, a professor at the Northwestern Pritzker School of Law.

'Lethal combination': Heat and disability

Many inmates are at greater risk of heat-related illness because of underlying conditions or medication they take that can affect their body's ability to regulate temperature, making heat in prisons a disability rights issue, said Morgan, who is also board president of the [Abolitionist Law Center](#), which advocates for prisoners' rights.

State prisons are required to abide by the Americans with Disabilities Act, a civil rights law that protects people from being discriminated against based on a disability and offers protections, including the right to reasonable accommodations.

Prisons generally don't implement accessibility measures, like air conditioning for inmates who are at high risk, unless they are prompted by litigation, Morgan said.

One inmate who was surveyed in the Texas report said he had Type 2 diabetes, asthma and high blood pressure, and described "inhumane living conditions" in non air-conditioned units.

"I shouldn't even be assigned housing on this row, but they don't really care about the inmate's health," said the inmate, who was housed at the Justice William G. McConnell Unit, the same South Texas prison where Jones died in 2015.

Fathi, the head of ACLU's National Prison Project, said the country's problem with mass incarceration and "uniquely long sentences" means the prison population is not only large, but also aging. As people age, they are more vulnerable to heat-related injuries and more likely to have other conditions. It's a "lethal combination," he said.

'Cruel and unusual' punishment?

The Eighth Amendment of the Constitution prohibits cruel and unusual punishment, meaning while prisons don't necessarily have to be comfortable, they do have to be humane, according to Fathi, who has successfully litigated cases on prison conditions in Wisconsin, Mississippi and Arizona.

"We're not talking about some exotic luxury that's enjoyed only by a tiny fraction of the rich," Fathi said. (Air conditioning) is something that's utterly routine in virtually every kind of building that has people in it, except, for some reason, prisons."

The New Jersey corrections watchdog report said it was the state's responsibility to protect inmates and prison staff from the heat.

"Because people detained in prison facilities cannot leave of their own accord and have limited control over their movement, possessions, and environment, the state assumes a responsibility for their humane treatment, including a responsibility to protect them from potential harms associated with extended exposure to heat and cold," the report said.

Courts are increasingly having to confront heat in prisons as an issue that may violate the Eighth Amendment, Fathi said. The problem with approaching the issue through litigation, though, is cases are brought in the aftermath of an incident and have to prove there was serious risk of injury or death, he said.

"Litigation is reactive," Fathi said. "We don't want it to get to that point. We want to see the necessary health and safety measures to be taken before people get sick and die."

Canales, the Texas state lawmaker, wants the state to be proactive instead. He [introduced a bill in the Texas House last year](#) that would have the state spend \$100 million every two years over a six-year span to cool the state's prisons. It was passed in the House, but failed to be taken up by the state Senate. He said he would try again, but has little hope it will be signed by Republican Gov. Greg Abbott.

	“Most people, they hear that the jails aren’t air-conditioned and the attitude is, ‘Those are criminals anyway,’” he said, adding that many incarcerated people are in for nonviolent drug offenses. “And this is the treatment they’re getting, and it’s cruel and unusual.”
Return to Top	SEE A FULL BREAK DOWN: Map shows at least 44 states without full air conditioning in prisons

HEADLINE	09/12 UN report: modern slavery on rise
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/modern-slavery-rise-crises-fuel-poverty-un-report-2022-09-12/
GIST	<p>GENEVA, Sept 12 (Reuters) - The number of people forced to work or in a marriage against their will has surged in recent years to around 50 million on any given day, the U.N.'s International Labour Organization (ILO) said on Monday upon releasing its modern slavery report.</p> <p>Crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts and climate change have led to unprecedented disruption to employment and education while exacerbating extreme poverty and forced migration, the agency said.</p> <p>Compared to the last count for the year 2016, the number of people in modern slavery has risen by around 9.3 million.</p> <p>According to the latest figures, forced labour accounted for 27.6 million of those in modern slavery in 2021, more than 3.3 million of whom are children, and forced marriage for 22 million.</p> <p>The ILO found that more than half of all forced labour occurred in either upper-middle income or high-income countries, with migrant workers more than three times as likely to be affected.</p> <p>The report made mention of Qatar, which has faced widespread allegations of labour rights violations relating to migrants working there in the run up to the FIFA soccer World Cup, starting in November.</p> <p>But since the ILO opened an office in the capital Doha in April 2018, there had been "significant progress" regarding the living and working conditions for hundreds of thousands of migrant workers in the country, even as problems remained with implementing new labour rules, the report said.</p> <p>Qatar 2022 Chief Executive Nasser Al Khater Qatar said on Thursday the country had faced a lot of unfair criticism over its hosting the World Cup that was not based on facts but it that it had responded to any fair criticism.</p> <p>The ILO report also pointed to concern about forced labour in parts of China.</p> <p>It referred to a report released by the U.N.'s human rights commissioner on Aug. 31 that said "serious human rights violations" had been committed in China and that the detention of Uyghurs and other Muslims in Xinjiang may constitute crimes against humanity.</p> <p>China has vigorously denied the allegations.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/11 Santa Fe birthday party shooting: 5 injured
SOURCE	https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Police-5-wounded-after-shooting-at-Santa-Fe-17434172.php
GIST	<p>SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — Five people have been injured after a shooting at a birthday party in Santa Fe, police said Sunday.</p> <p>They said the shooting occurred shortly before 1 a.m.</p> <p>Arriving officers found two adults and three teenagers had been shot and were being treated at a hospital for injuries that were not considered life-threatening.</p>

	Police said the shooter or shooters remain at large.
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HEADLINE	09/12 Prevent, prepare for, respond mass attacks
SOURCE	https://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20220912-how-to-prevent-prepare-for-and-respond-to-mass-attacks
GIST	<p>Put aside the politics for a moment, the pointing fingers, the thoughts and prayers and hopeless shrugs. What can people do right now to protect their communities from mass shootings?</p> <p>Researchers at RAND have spent two years working to answer that question. They didn't just look at the deadliest shootings and ask what went wrong. They looked at would-be shootings that never made the news and asked what went right. The result is a step-by-step guide to prevent shootings and other mass attacks before they happen, and to save lives when they do. It's written for police, paramedics, local government officials—and for church leaders, concert promoters, grocery store owners, and school superintendents.</p> <p>"I don't like having to live in a world in which I know my daughter has a lot of fear over this," said John Hollywood, who led the effort as a senior operations researcher at RAND. "We have the findings, we have the tools, we have the processes that we need to really do a better job of getting a handle on this. It's a matter of going out and using them."</p> <p>In 2018, a woman in Everett, Washington, just north of Seattle, picked up a spiral notebook that had been lying on her grandson's bed. She flipped it open and found the detailed outline of a school shooting. Zip ties for the doors. Bombs beneath the bleachers. A date in April that would coincide with the Columbine shooting.</p> <p>"I'm preparing myself," her grandson had written. "I can't wait. My aim has gotten much more accurate." The woman did the most important thing she could do. She called for help.</p> <p>RAND's study looked at 640 mass attack plots that endangered, or would have endangered, four or more people in a public place between 1995 and 2020. More than half were thwarted before anyone got hurt—and in two-thirds of those cases, it was because of a tip from the public. Yet previous research has shown that people are much more likely to try to talk to a potential shooter themselves or to do nothing than to call in a report.</p> <p>"We have to get people to trust their instincts, to know that if they think about something for more than about five seconds, they really need to take action," said Tara Richardson, a senior consultant with Lafayette Group, a public safety consulting firm that partnered with RAND.</p> <p>For years now, RAND has been pulling together evidence to inform the debate over which policies could slow gun violence in America, such as child-access prevention laws. But the mass attacks project had a different purpose, and a different audience. Researchers wanted to provide tips and tools that communities could implement themselves, no Senate vote or governor's signature required.</p> <hr/> <p>What Warning Signs Look Like and Where They Have Come From <i>The top warning signs to report</i></p> <p>In the analysis, it was found that warning signs tend to exist in combination, meaning that there are signs that a person wants to attack (i.e., signs of motivation) and is taking actions to carry out an attack (i.e., signs of preparation).</p> <p>Motivation (serious intent to attack) + Preparation (concrete actions for attack) = Warning (intent and actions)</p> <p>Examples of motivation are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · claims that they are inspired by past attacks · claims that they will fulfill an extremist cause (especially if they were kicked out of a group for being too violent)

- claims that someone is (or others are) so harmful or threatening that they have *no choice* but to attack

Examples of *preparation* are

- written plans for an attack
- attempts to recruit others
- attempts to learn how to kill many people (in person or online)
- coordination with known violent extremists
- seeking arsenals of weapons and ammunition (without a benign reason, such as hunting)
- travel for training or to the target
- site probing or breaching

That starts with educating people about the specific warning signs they should watch for—words and actions that indicate not just motivation, but preparation for an attack. Those warning signs have not been well-publicized, but they should be. Public education campaigns could provide better guidance—beyond just “see something, say something”—about when people should reach for the phone.

Communities need to think of their response to such tips as a team effort. That means schools, mental health providers, social service agencies, major venue owners, and law enforcement all sharing information and establishing a single point person to follow up. That follow-up should be relentless and sustained. One of the biggest predictors of a plot reaching execution was information falling through the cracks.

In late November 2021, for example, rumors began to spread through the halls of Oxford High School in eastern Michigan that something terrible was about to happen. They were specific enough, and scary enough, that some students stayed home from school. “We got none of it,” the county sheriff said afterward.

During a break between classes, with the halls crowded with students, a 15-year-old boy walked out of a bathroom with a 9 mm handgun and opened fire. Four students died. Seven people were hurt. But the school had practiced active-shooter drills, and every classroom had a lock on the door. Students who fled the hallways knew to get into a classroom, lock and barricade the door, and grab anything they could to defend themselves—a hockey stick, a tape dispenser, scissors.

Run. Hide. Fight. When a shooting starts, those are, in order, the most effective ways to survive, and they should be as well-publicized as the warning signs. [RAND’s study](#) included 65 cases in which people fought back—and in 85 percent of those cases, they stopped the gunfire or made the attacker flee. In 12 cases, people rushed the shooter from different directions—and in all 12 cases, they stopped the shooting.

Communities need to know how they would respond, too. Police drills need to emphasize a lesson that has been clear since Columbine: Don’t wait, don’t assemble a response team, just stop the shooting. But schools, shopping malls, and other so-called “soft targets” also need to train—with police and other community partners—until their response is seamless. Washington, D.C., for example, recently offered active-shooter training for nightlife and religious workers, with instruction on what to do if a gunman is nearby and how to tie a tourniquet.

[RAND’s study](#) identified three additional steps that such potential targets can take to better protect people inside their buildings. They can ensure plenty of well-marked exits. They can provide longer walk-ups and controlled-entry areas, so people can see who’s coming. And, like the high school in Oxford, they can put locks on the doors. One study found that, as of 2017, no active shooter in the United States had successfully breached a locked door.

“We have examples where a shooter shows up, the doors are locked, and the shooter is left to basically run around until the police show up,” Hollywood said. “You haven’t heard about them because they weren’t mass-casualty events.”

RAND and its partners on the project—Lafayette Group, RTI International, and Karchmer Associates—chose not to present their findings in an inch-thick research report. Instead, they took what they learned

from the data and from interviews with dozens of experts and first responders, and used it to build a [free, online tool](#), available to anyone.

The tool walks users through every step of preparing for, preventing, and responding to a mass attack. It includes links to funding sources, case studies, model programs, assessment tools, databases, and training guides. The National Institute of Justice sponsored the project.

“We wanted to give communities clear, concrete steps they can take to protect themselves,” said [Dic Donohue](#), who came to the project as the director of the [RAND Center for Quality Policing](#), a former Boston-area transit police officer—and a shooting survivor. A bullet severed his femoral artery during a gun battle with the Boston Marathon bombers in 2013.

“Community stakeholders such as schools or law enforcement agencies need to assess: ‘Where are we missing things?’” he said. “It comes down to training and follow-up. Do they have relationships in the community? Can they get the word out? If something happens, God forbid, do they know how to reunite families?”

[RAND’s project](#) had its roots in many places—in Orlando’s Pulse nightclub, in the Route 91 Harvest country music festival in Las Vegas, in the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, Texas. But one shooting in particular motivated the research. In February 2018, a former student who had threatened to kill people and was known to have weapons walked into Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, and started shooting. Seventeen people died. It was the deadliest school shooting since Sandy Hook—until this spring, when 19 children and two teachers were killed in Uvalde, Texas.

Just one day before the shooting in Parkland, a woman in Everett, Washington, called the police to report the notebook she had found in her grandson’s room. Police arrived, searched the room, and found a rifle hidden in a guitar case. They pulled the grandson from his classroom at school and arrested him.

He had written in his notebook that he wanted to make his school attack “infamous.” It’s not, because nothing fell through the cracks. He pleaded guilty to charges that included attempted first degree murder and illegal possession of an explosive device. He’s now serving time in a Washington state prison.

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HEADLINE	09/11 Portland: arrests; multiple counts arson
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/mt-tabor-arson-suspects-arrested-charged-with-multiple-counts-portland-oregon-multnomah-county
GIST	<p>PORTLAND, Ore. — Portland Fire investigators have arrested three individuals in connection with several arsons near Mt. Tabor and surrounding areas.</p> <p>The three suspects were taken into custody on Saturday, officials say.</p> <p>The suspects are thought to be responsible for several dozen known intentionally set fires.</p> <p>The arrests come after an investigation with the information provided by concerned citizens and the cooperation of Portland Police and Portland Parks.</p> <p>Each suspect has been charged with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 counts of arson one• 4 counts of arson two <p>The suspects are being held at the Multnomah County Jail.</p> <p>Portland Fire Chief Sara Boone released a statement Sunday afternoon about the arrests of the arson suspects:</p>

"I would like to acknowledge the coordinated efforts of community members who led to the successful arrests of 3 suspects in connection with the Mt. Tabor arson fires. Their proactive efforts, tips, and leads played a significant role in keeping each other safe while protecting a valuable and natural forested park setting. I also would like to recognize and acknowledge the outstanding work and collective efforts of the Portland Fire Investigations Unit, Portland Parks and Recreation, Portland Police, the Bureau of Emergency Communications, and the Multnomah County DA's Office. A tremendous amount of time and resources were dedicated to this endeavor with a shared commitment and urgency to identify and arrest these suspects."

KATU spoke with parkgoers about their thoughts on the arrests.

"Good! I'm so glad to hear that," said Emily Siskin, a parkgoer.

"These kids obviously have a lot of energy, they should channel it into something more productive," said Audrey Goldfarb.

Neighbors expressed concerns for weeks following dozens of fires at Mt. Tabor park.

"I just felt scared and disgusted because this is a community resource, so having somebody try and ruin it by setting fires, just makes it harder for everyone to enjoy. So i was really glad to hear they found the people who did it," Siskin said.

"It was a huge relief," said Goldfarb.

"I was very satisfied to hear it," said Zac Reisner.

Audrey Goldfarb first noticed wood piling up at the park a few months ago and quickly became concerned about the fire risk.

She then jumped into action with community members including Zac Reisner to do something about it.

"I've been watching these woodpiles for months. They've all been eliminated, some of them i did myself, others were done by community members. Others were done by the park staff," said Goldfarb.

Portland fire didn't confirm these piles are connected to the arson investigation but do say they can be dangerous if a fire breaks out.

They said given the high fire danger right now, it's good to have the suspects in custody.

"Just in Portland yesterday we had several large multi-acre wildfires because of the conditions," said Lt. Tommy Schroeder, public information officer with Portland Fire & Rescue.

While parkgoers are relieved, there was still a lot of damage done.

"When the fire department came to put them out, they had taken down the mineral soil to make sure everything was dead out. So those are going to have to be replanted," Goldfarb said.

"After these arrests, are there any efforts to protect the park incase there are more people involved?" asked KATU's Frances Lin.

"I do know that on the 21st, there will be another neighborhood meeting to update the neighbors and nearby communities about what the progress is and if there are any other concerns," Schroeder responded.

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SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/man-shot-to-death-in-seattles-denny-triangle-neighborhood/
GIST	<p>A man was shot to death Sunday night in Seattle's Denny Triangle neighborhood near downtown, according to Seattle police.</p> <p>Police and medics responded to the shooting in the 700 block of Lenora Street, in the vicinity of the Amazon Spheres, after 8:30 p.m., according to a tweet by the Seattle Police Department and the Seattle Fire Department's real-time 911 tracker.</p> <p>An adult male was located at the scene and declared deceased, police said. Homicide detectives were responding and police were searching for a suspect in the area.</p> <p>The death continues Seattle's rash of homicides in 2022, including four people killed in five days in late August.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 Prison time for altercation aboard plane
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/new-york-woman-sentenced-prison-altercation-plane-rcna47247
GIST	<p>A New York woman has been sentenced to four months in prison for interfering with crew members aboard a flight from Dallas to Los Angeles last year that had to be diverted to Phoenix, according to federal prosecutors.</p> <p>They said Kelly Pichardo and another first-class passenger engaged in intimidating behavior on the flight and both women had to be removed from the plane after it landed at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport on Feb. 24, 2021.</p> <p>Authorities said the women each assaulted a passenger during the flight and used racial slurs when a male passenger asked them to stop.</p> <p>Pichardo also allegedly spit at the man when he tried to record the altercation.</p> <p>The case was investigated by the FBI and Phoenix police and the two women were indicted for disorderly conduct for verbally and physically assaulting other customers and flight crew members.</p> <p>Prosecutors said Pichardo, a 32-year-old resident of the Bronx, has been ordered to pay nearly \$9,200 restitution to American Airlines as a result of the altercation.</p> <p>They say Pichardo also will serve three years of supervised release following her prison sentence.</p> <p>The other female passenger involved in the incident has pleaded guilty and will be sentenced in November.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/12 CBP seizes record-breaking \$12M in meth
SOURCE	https://www.foxnews.com/us/border-patrol-seizes-record-breaking-12m-meth-del-rio-port-entry
GIST	<p>U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents seized nearly \$12 million worth of methamphetamine at the Del Rio Port of Entry in Del Rio, Texas.</p> <p>The bust, which took place last week, was the largest seizure of meth in the border port's history.</p> <p>Agents discovered 320 packages with 1,337 pounds of meth inside a tractor-trailer on September 5. The drugs carry an estimated street value of \$11.9 million, CBP said in a press release.</p>

	<p>"This is a massive seizure of methamphetamine, it is [the] largest in the history of the port and it reflects the steadfast commitment of our officers to the CBP border security mission and their effective application of technology, training and experience," Port Director Liliana Flores said in the release.</p> <p>The seizure at the Del Rio International Bridge occurred after an agent opted for a secondary search of the tractor-trailer carrying a shipment of diesel tank reservoir containers.</p> <p>A canine and non-intrusive inspection system examination was conducted, leading to the discovery of the drugs, the agency said.</p> <p>U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement-Homeland Security Investigations special agents are investigating the seizure of narcotics, CBP said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/10 Violent youth add to America's crime wave
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/sep/10/carjackings-shootings-murder-violent-underage-offe/
GIST	<p>Some of the most violent crimes in America are being carried out by its youngest members of society and those who deal with youth offenders say the trend won't reverse anytime soon.</p> <p>The startling surge of lawlessness began during the pandemic and, in cities large and small that bear the brunt of the crime wave, leaders fret that there are no easy solutions.</p> <p>In Washington last month, Commanders' running back Brain Robinson Jr. was shot in an attempted carjacking perpetrated by an armed teenager.</p> <p>Prosecutors in Philadelphia this summer filed murder charges against two 14-year-olds, a boy and a girl, for allegedly beating a 73-year-old man to death with a traffic cone.</p> <p>A 17-year-old in San Antonio, Texas, was arrested and charged with murder, accused of luring a 15-year-old boy from his home in what police say was revenge for a drug robbery.</p> <p>The list goes on and on.</p> <p>"Youth crime is absolutely spiking," said Marc T. Little, executive director of CURE America Action, a Christian-based conservative advocacy group focused on urban issues. "All we have to do is look at the news and most of what we read about the hotbeds of violence in cities is crimes committed by youth."</p> <p>Analysts say the rise in juvenile violent crime is caused by several factors, including absentee fathers, shuttered schools during the pandemic, and soft-on-crime district attorneys either refusing to press charges or seeking lenient sentences.</p> <p>That has created a perfect storm for communities struggling to contain the violence.</p> <p>Another factor, analysts say, is left-wing politicians and prosecutors whose lenient approach to juvenile crime.</p> <p>New Orleans Mayor LaToya Contrell angered police and others when she appeared in juvenile court last month to support a 14-year-old carjacker. She sat with the perpetrator's family as he was sentenced to probation for three first-degree robbery convictions committed when he was only 13.</p> <p>The head of the New Orleans Fraternal Order of Police said the move was a "disappointment" and "unfortunate."</p> <p>"I pick no sides," the mayor later said, explaining that the teen was in her Pathways program which is intended to help at-risk youth stay on the right path.</p>

In Los Angeles, where rising crime rates have been plagued by brazen smash-and-grab robberies and home invasions, District Attorney George Gascon has sharply restricted when juveniles can be tried as an adult.

Those actions have sent a message to teens that there will be no consequences for their crimes and send teens back into urban communities to carry out further mayhem, Mr. Little said.

“People like George Gascon and others are not making sure teens are rehabilitated, but just looking to lower the numbers of youth in prison and sending them back into the communities,” he said.

While no one has tracked national data on crimes committed by juveniles, statistics from areas throughout the country point to a widespread rise in violent crime by these perpetrators.

Data from the police department in Montgomery County, Maryland, which borders Washington, shows that the number of homicide victims and suspects under the age of 21 has tripled since last year.

So far this year, there have been six homicide victims and nine suspects who are under 21, up from two victims and three suspects in 2021.

Through the first six months of 2022, prosecutors in Indianapolis charged six people under 21 with murder, compared to two charged throughout all of 2020 and the five charged by the end of 2021.

Police in Washington arrested 63 juveniles for carjackings so far this year, on pace to shatter last year’s record of 100 carjacking arrests. For all of 2019, only 25 teens were arrested for carjacking.

In Prince George’s County, Maryland, which also borders Washington, police arrested an eye-popping 430 juveniles so far this year, more than double the number from this time last year.

New Orleans police arrested 157 juveniles between June and August, including 24 who had been arrested more than once during that period.

The most recently available data on violent youth crime is from 2020. That data, compiled by The Sentencing Project, which advocates for reducing incarceration, showed that the number of homicides committed by those aged 10-19 increased by 1% in 2020 compared to 2019. However, the total number of juvenile arrests dropped by 8% during the same period.

Mac Levin, chief policy counsel for the Council on Criminal Justice, said it’s hard to know if juvenile crime is surging or if youths are just committing more high-profile offenses. The number of violent crimes solved by the police has decreased since 2020, making it difficult to determine who perpetrated the crime.

Mr. Levin also noted that in several cases, youth and adults committed the crime together, adding another variable that complicates quantifying youth crime.

Some municipalities have taken steps to address the violence.

Officials in Prince George’s County on Friday began enforcing a curfew for teens, requiring them to be off the streets between the hours of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. Sunday through Thursday and between 12 a.m. and 5 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, unless accompanied by an adult.

Officials in Philadelphia, Washington and Winston-Salem, North Carolina followed suit, quietly resuming enforcing their long-standing juvenile curfews by trying to curb crime in areas where young people tend to congregate.

Curfews exist in at least 400 towns, cities and counties across the country, but are rarely enforced, according to data from the National Youth Rights Association.

The move was popular in the 1990s when politicians sought to be tough-on-crime at a time when America was awash in violent crime. However, curfews fell out of favor in the mid-2000s, when social justice activists said they trampled on the rights of Black youth.

Studies show that curfews do little to curb crime in the communities where they are enforced. A 2016 study by the Campbell Collaboration, a non-profit that reviews public policies, examined 7,000 studies on juvenile curfews and concluded they were “ineffective.”

The Campbell Collaboration concluded that there was a slight increase in crime during curfew hours and it had no impact on reducing crime when the curfew was not in effect.

Data from the Justice Department’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention released this year found that violence committed by youth aged 7 through 17 is more frequent during school days and occurs between 1 pm and 7 pm.

“These kids are brazen and out in the light of day doing what they do,” said Kevin McGary, president of the conservative activist group Every Black Life Matters. “If all these crimes were committed at night, this might have some effect, but I don’t see it as a real solution.”

Mr. McGary said the nation must work to address the crisis of fatherlessness in Black communities.

A Justice Department study last year found that 72% of adolescents serving sentences for murder are from fatherless households, while 60% of rapists grew up without a dad.

Meanwhile, more than 72% of African-American children are born to unmarried mothers. Between 1930 and 1950 over 90% of children in African-American households were born to a married couple.

“Fatherlessness is the common denominator for crime in the urban communities,” Mr. McGary said. “Fathers are not there as a voice of reason, pillar of rationality, and a barrier to protect children. Single moms are working and children are left to their own devices and we are reaping the consequences of that.”

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HEADLINE	09/10 Gun violence shadows Sweden election
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/10/world/europe/sweden-election.html
GIST	<p>STOCKHOLM — The best years were still ahead for Susanna Yakes and her 12-year-old daughter, Adriana. The two danced to music around the house and screamed together on roller coasters — still ahead were more adult milestones like travel and love.</p> <p>“I could see it on her face, you know, when the rose is almost ready to open,” Ms. Yakes said, adding that she was excited for the vibrant woman her daughter was becoming.</p> <p>That all changed one night in 2020 when Adriana went for a walk with her dog and got caught in the middle of a gang conflict outside a restaurant.</p> <p>“I didn’t know until I lost my daughter that there are different kind of tears,” said Ms. Yakes, 34, who two years later still visits Adriana’s grave twice a week.</p> <p>The killing of young Adriana, an innocent bystander, became a prominent part of a steadily swelling epidemic of gun violence in Sweden, which now has some of the highest rates of gun homicides in Europe.</p> <p>As Sweden votes on Sunday in parliamentary elections, gun crime looms large for a country more commonly associated with its high living standards, women’s rights and welcoming asylum policies.</p>

The gun issue, amid an energy crisis and soaring inflation, has helped spawn an exceptionally tight race — one entwined with deeper questions about Swedish identity, a diversifying country and a failure to integrate immigrants, especially those who arrived in Sweden during [Europe's migration crisis in 2015](#).

Other European countries like Germany with similar levels of immigration have not experienced the same rise in gun violence, and with many cases unsolved, researchers say more study is needed to understand the epidemic.

But the debate has offered fodder for conservative parties in an already tense campaign, especially the far-right Sweden Democrats, a contender for Sweden's leading opposition party who are using the violence to further a [longstanding anti-immigrant agenda](#).

The center-left Social Democrats — already governing without a majority in Parliament — find themselves in perhaps their most precarious position after a century of dominating Swedish politics. The government argues that more resources and employment opportunities must also be put toward integrating the segregated, immigrant-heavy suburbs that ring major cities where the gun violence has been concentrated.

But fearful of losing more voters, it has capitulated to public concerns by adopting tougher policies on crime, even as the far right and other conservatives are calling for even harsher steps.

“Too much migration and too weak integration has led to parallel societies where criminal gangs have been able to grow and gain a foothold,” Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson said last month, as she introduced measures expanding police powers and lengthening punishments for serious weapons offenses.

Such calls in the middle of the election campaign left the victims of crimes frustrated that they were being used as political pawns and the residents of Sweden's poorer neighborhoods feeling marginalized by a nation that promised them equal treatment.

“Crime is, to a certain degree, also a question of how we see immigrants and how we see the multicultural society,” said Magnus Blomgren, a professor of political science at Umea University, in northern Sweden, adding that the issue had now taken on outsize importance in a country of shifting demographics.

“We have a picture of what we are,” he said. “But that is changing.”

And for now, uncomfortably so.

A [fifth of Sweden's](#) 10 million residents were born abroad — [split between European migrants and an increasing number of](#) migrants from countries like Syria, Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan in the past decade. But in cities like Stockholm, Malmo and Gothenburg — where a higher proportion of migrants have settled compared with the rest of the nation — the media and residents alike point to two separate worlds: a polished city center emblematic of the nation's wealth, and poorer, ethnically diverse outer suburbs where police officers carry tourniquets to stem gunshot wounds.

“Linking it to migration is in the interests of those that are interested in creating a very simplified reality and creating polarization,” said Amir Rostami, a sociologist at the University of Gavle. “We are only seeing this very narrowly.”

From 2010 to 2018, the number of shootings in Sweden rose rapidly. The [police this year have so far recorded 273 shootings](#) in what they expect could be Sweden's worst year ever. The current record number of shootings was set in 2020, at 379.

In a country with strict gun laws, where licenses are usually limited to hunting rifles, criminologists have linked the shootings to the illegal drug trade and say they have been fueled by a stockpile of thousands of firearms smuggled in from postwar Balkan countries, Eastern Europe and Turkey.

Still, as the nation closed in on the election, lawmakers zeroed in on promises of law and order, citing gang warfare and riots in some Swedish towns.

That focus left some migrants in neighborhoods outside of cities like Stockholm mistrustful of the authorities and feeling like second-class citizens even after decades in the country.

“We came with hopes and aspirations,” said Axel Shako, an activist from London involved at the Fryshuset youth center in north Stockholm. “The question should be for the politicians. We are just doing our best.”

The victims of gun violence, too, say that they are weary of watching lawmakers clash while little progress has been made on reversing the problem.

“When he died, I didn’t see the point of living,” said Maritha Ogilvie, whose son Marley Fredriksson, 19, who was Black, was shot and killed seven years ago in Stockholm.

Since then, Ms. Ogilvie has campaigned for harsher punishments for gun crimes — but she believes programs supporting young teenagers are equally important, frustrated by a system that she says has not done enough to protect people of color like her son.

“They are trying to run a country that they don’t even understand,” she said, referring to lawmakers, despite their promises to address the problems. “Racist parties,” she said, were simply using the issue to get voters.

For Carolina Sinisalo, the grief of a shooting that killed her 15-year-old son, Robin, and partly paralyzed her older son Alejandro was nearly unfathomable.

Ms. Sinisalo, who lives in Stockholm’s Rinkeby neighborhood, which is known for shootings, is running this year as a Social Democrat for a local political office for the first time.

“The guns — it’s the tip of iceberg,” she said.

“The prime issue here is the schools and the ability to get to work,” Ms. Sinisalo said, adding that despite supporting harsher laws for gun violence, the tenor of the campaign had shocked her. “Nobody is born criminal.”

The cases remain unsolved. They join about 70 percent of gun homicides that are uncleared in Sweden, and researchers say tackling that could help address the problem.

But police officers, who blame local gangs for the shootings, say they face challenges in getting witnesses to speak on the record and collecting enough evidence to prosecute suspects in the Swedish justice system, which does not allow anonymous witnesses — something that conservatives have proposed changing.

That is little comfort for the victims’ families.

Stockholm has begun sending more police officers and security guards to neighborhoods where shootings are more frequent. On a recent afternoon, one officer, Rissa Seidou, stopped to chat with passers-by during a routine neighborhood patrol.

Inspector Seidou has lost track of the gun crime scenes and funerals she has attended in the past few years. Now, she is working on a policy strategy she believes will save lives: building connections with the local community to encourage residents to report unusual behavior to the police.

Inspector Seidou advises parents to send their children away if she believes they are at risk of being hurt, and she hosts information sessions for parents on the Swedish legal system.

	<p>“For me, it’s not about getting more police officers,” said Inspector Seidou, adding that she was frustrated with the way officials had handled the issue. “We need to use them well.”</p> <p>Underage offenders in Sweden are already facing less leniency if they commit serious crimes, as the government said last month that it would increase the sentence for serious weapons crimes.</p> <p>But social workers and youth organizations have called harsher punishments a Band-Aid solution that ignores the larger problem of the inequality dividing Sweden, including better resources for school programs, work opportunities and mental health.</p> <p>“I wish those questions were as urgent and as important as the question of putting them away in prison,” said Camila Salazar Atias, a criminologist at Fryshuset, a national youth organization that runs programs for at-risk children.</p> <p>Juri Escobar knows from personal experience what needs to be done, he says. A former gang member, Mr. Escobar served a 10-year prison sentence for murder, blaming a difficult upbringing for leading him into that lifestyle.</p> <p>“Harder punishments will not work,” he said. “You have give them an option, give them a treatment.”</p> <p>Today, he runs Vision 24, a program that he says collaborates with the police and social services in Stockholm to help about 30 men disengage from criminal groups every year. More recently, he has been getting calls from smaller towns in Sweden.</p> <p>“Nobody wants to live this life,” Mr. Escobar said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/10 Tacoma violence deadliest year since 1980
SOURCE	https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/crime/article265496796.html
GIST	<p>New findings released this week in the investigation of a deadly house fire in December pushed Tacoma’s homicide count to 34 for 2021. According to state crime records dating back to 1980, the city has never had so many killings.</p> <p>Until this year.</p> <p>As of Thursday afternoon, Tacoma has recorded 35 homicides in 2022. That’s two more than were recorded in 1994 and 1988, according to annual reports from the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs. Homicides in those years were at the height of a crime wave fueled by gang violence, drugs and drive-by shootings. It’s less clear now what factors are behind the surge in killings, but it follows a national trend of increased violent crime since the outset of the coronavirus pandemic.</p> <p>In a written statement to The News Tribune, Mayor Victoria Woodards said she, like others in the city, is “saddened and frustrated” by the violence. She said these crimes cause ripples of trauma affecting families, first responders and the community.</p> <p>“Although we will not see dramatic changes overnight, we have placed an immediate focus on substantially increasing police visibility at places where violent crime is concentrated, and prioritized street-level deterrence in these areas,” Woodards said.</p> <p>Although the number of killings has increased since the ‘80s and ‘90s, the homicide rate per 100,000 people has declined. In 1988, Tacoma’s population was about 161,400, according to WASPC, putting it at about 20.4 homicides per 100,000 people. The homicide rate in 1994 was 18.0.</p> <p>Last year, the city had a population of about 214,700, making its homicide rate 15.8 per 100,000.</p>

All but one of the victims of homicide this year died in shootings (34). Of those, three were incidents where a police officer fatally shot a person. Last year, there were no fatal police shootings in the city.

The deaths are scattered throughout Tacoma, but mapping shows the majority occurred in neighborhoods southeast of Interstate 5, in the South End and Eastside, which account for 20 homicides. South Tacoma has recorded eight. The Hilltop neighborhood has had three, and downtown has seen four killings.

The tightest concentration of lethal violence has occurred along a half-mile stretch of South Hosmer Street, a commercial corridor of the South End home to nearly 40 percent (9) of Tacoma's 23 licensed hotels. Five homicides have been reported on the street, all connected to lodging establishments. A recent News Tribune investigation tells the stories of those who live and work there, and it shows how the area came to be a "battleground in a desperate fight against rising crime."

Tacoma Police Chief Avery Moore has made addressing violent crime a focus of his first months in the position. He started in mid-January, coming to Tacoma from the Dallas Police Department, where he was the assistant chief for the Investigations Bureau. Moore has said he wants to make Tacoma "the safest city in the country."

Moore unveiled his plan to reduce violent crime at a City Council study session in July. The plan was developed with help from criminologists from the University of Texas, and it has three phases: hot-spot policing, place-based improvements and focused deterrence. A representative from TPD was not available Thursday to comment on Tacoma's surge in homicides.

Woodards made reference to aspects of Moore's plan in her statement to The News Tribune, saying it uses evidence-based strategies that have been successful in other cities. She also said the city would increase funding for "intervention programs" and that it is working with community stakeholders to address underlying conditions contributing to violent crime.

"As we implement the plan, we will also be focusing on deterrence and efforts to break the cycle of violence among the small number of repeat and high-risk offenders who are responsible for committing most of the violent crime in Tacoma," Woodards wrote.

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HEADLINE	09/09 Sheriff: Maryland shooting leaves 5 dead
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-vi/2022/09/09/five-dead-maryland-shooting/
GIST	<p>Five people are dead after a shooting in Maryland on Friday, officials said.</p> <p>Cecil County Sheriff Scott A. Adams said at a news conference that three children, a man and a woman were found dead in the unit block of Hebron Court in Elks Mills, Md., around 9:20 a.m. The community is in northern Maryland near the Delaware border.</p> <p>Adams said officers responded to a residence after a man called 911 to report that three children and a woman were shot, then hung up. Though emergency responders called back, no one picked up, Adams said.</p> <p>The man was later found dead in a detached garage with a semiautomatic handgun nearby, according to officials, while the other four victims were found in the residence.</p> <p>Adams said authorities were not yet certain that the man took his own life, but "it appears to be the case." He said the 911 caller from the scene appeared to be "catatonic" and compared the shooting to a murder-suicide in Cecil County in 2019. Officials said there was no threat to the public.</p> <p>"It's a horrific day, and I know everybody's prayers are appreciated," Adams said.</p> <p>The names of the deceased were not released pending family notification, officials said. Adams said the children were in the fifth, sixth, and seventh grades and appeared to be home-schooled.</p>

	Four schools were put on alert as the shooting unfolded early Friday, Adams said, and animal control was called to care for two cats and a dog found in the residence.
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HEADLINE	09/09 Mexico places national guard under army
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/09/mexico-national-guard-army/
GIST	<p>MEXICO CITY — Mexico’s Senate voted Friday to put the army in charge of the 115,000-member national guard as the government abandons plans for a civilian-led federal security agency and further expands the military’s role in tackling the country’s extreme violence.</p> <p>The move is sparking outrage from human-rights groups, security analysts and legal scholars, who say it’s weakening Mexico’s young democracy but won’t address a principle cause of the explosion in crime: A dysfunctional justice system.</p> <p>President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who took office in 2018, created the national guard to replace the 40,000-member federal police. Authorities said the guard would help cement the government’s control over Mexican territory, which is increasingly being challenged by organized-crime groups flush with money from drug trafficking, extortion, oil theft and other illegal activities.</p> <p>The president has defended his new plan to place the civilian force under army leadership.</p> <p>“My proposal isn’t to militarize or move toward authoritarianism, but to guide — under the Defense Ministry’s vigilance — the healthy growth of what should be the main public security institution in the country,” he said last week.</p> <p>He says army control will ensure the guard doesn’t suffer widespread corruption, as the federal police did. That force became central to crime-fighting strategy under President Felipe Calderón, who served from 2006 through 2012, and it received millions of dollars in training and equipment from the U.S. government. The official in charge of the police, Genaro García Luna, was eventually arrested and charged in U.S. federal court with taking bribes from the Sinaloa cartel of Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán.</p> <p>García Luna has pleaded not guilty; he’s scheduled to go on trial in New York next year.</p> <p>For all its problems, the federal police did have a large corps of officers trained to use intelligence to build cases. The national guard, in contrast, has limited capacity to do investigations; it detained 8,258 people last year — “fewer than a medium-sized municipal police force,” wrote Alejandro Hope, a security analyst, in the daily Universal. Just 14 of the arrests were the result of intelligence work, according to government figures.</p> <p>“By all accounts, it’s a force that patrols and doesn’t investigate,” Hope wrote. That means the guard won’t be effective in reducing impunity in the justice system, Hope and other analysts say.</p> <p>Ana Lorena Delgadillo, the human rights activist who heads the Foundation for Justice, said the shift to army control will reduce visibility into the national guard’s budget and activities. “For citizens, there will be a sacrifice of transparency, accountability, respect for human rights,” she wrote in the daily Reforma. Advertisement</p> <p>Since Calderón deployed the military to fight drug trafficking gangs, homicides have soared and tens of thousands of people have disappeared. López Obrador says his strategy is making headway, with an about 8-percent drop in homicides this year.</p> <p>The guard was established as a civilian-led body under a constitutional revision in 2019 that envisioned the force as eventually replacing the military in fighting crime. Yet the guard has drawn most of its members from the army and navy, and its commander is a retired general. Friday’s vote recognized what</p>

	<p>was already, in practical terms, military control of the guard. The measure was approved several days ago by the Chamber of Deputies.</p> <p>López Obrador had pushed in recent months for a constitutional revision to shift the guard’s operational and administrative control to the Defense Ministry, but he lacked the supermajority in congress to make that change. In resorting to do it through normal legislation, legal scholars and security analysts said that, he’s violating the constitution and opening the door to years of judicial wrangling.</p> <p>“Everything that the National Guard does (detentions, acquisitions, regulations, disciplinary actions et cetera) is going to be caught up in a cloud of legal uncertainty,” Hope wrote.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/09 Court approves virtual life term for teen
SOURCE	https://mynorthwest.com/3623585/washington-supreme-court-oks-virtual-life-term-for-teen/
GIST	<p>SEATTLE (AP) — One year after saying virtual life sentences are unconstitutional for teenage killers, the Washington Supreme Court changed course Thursday in a split ruling that drew irate dissents from four justices.</p> <p>The 5-4 decision was a striking departure for a court that in recent years has steadily embraced research showing that juveniles’ brain development typically makes them less culpable than adults, and which has made significant efforts to undo the impact of racial bias in the criminal justice system.</p> <p>“The majority rewrites our jurisprudence to profoundly limit the protection we have found our state constitution gives to children,” Chief Justice Steven González wrote in his dissent.</p> <p>The court upheld a 61-year sentence for Tonelli Anderson, a Black man who was 17 when he shot two women, killing one of them and blinding the other, during a drug robbery in Tukwila in 1994. An accomplice shot and killed a man in the same home.</p> <p>In 2018 — in line with a long trend of federal and state criminal cases recognizing that children must be treated differently by the courts — Washington’s justices held that it violated the state Constitution to sentence 16- or 17-year-olds to life in prison without parole. That ruling came in the case of Brian Bassett, a white man who killed his parents and brother when he was 16.</p> <p>Last September, the court went further, striking down a 46-year sentence for Timothy Haag, a white man who was 17 when he drowned his 7-year-old neighbor in a bathtub.</p> <p>The majority decision in that case — signed by six justices — held that such a long sentence for a juvenile is essentially a life sentence because it leaves the defendant without “a meaningful opportunity to rejoin society after leaving prison.” Therefore, the court said, it was unconstitutional.</p> <p>Thursday’s ruling abandoned that precedent, saying instead that such virtual life sentences for juveniles are barred by the state Constitution only if their crimes “reflect youthful immaturity, impetuosity, or failure to appreciate risks and consequences.”</p> <p>Anderson’s was not such a case, Justice Debra Stephens wrote for the majority.</p> <p>He was not immediately arrested for the shootings, but went on to commit other crimes as a young adult, including assault and robbery, and he wrote letters to girlfriends bragging about the shootings. It wasn’t until 1998, after someone tipped off investigators about the letters, that he was charged. He long failed to admit guilt or express remorse, Stephens noted.</p> <p>Stephens dissented from the majority in Haag’s case last year, saying she did not believe a 46-year sentence was necessarily unconstitutional for a juvenile. She framed her opinion Thursday as a clarification of that ruling.</p>

The dissenting justices disagreed, calling it a rewriting of the Haag decision's clear prohibition on virtual life sentences for juveniles. It was nonsensical and troubling that the court would find a 46-year sentence for a white 17-year-old to be an unconstitutional "de facto" life sentence, while upholding a 61-year sentence for a Black 17-year-old, they said.

"Bassett and Haag are both white. Anderson is Black," Justice Mary Yu wrote in her dissent. "Bassett and Haag were both recognized by this court as former juvenile offenders capable of redemption and rehabilitation, and they were ordered to be resentenced accordingly. Anderson has been denied any such recognition and resentencing, contrary to the law and the evidence."

Yu wrote that she was not accusing the majority of intentional discrimination, but she added: "It would be willfully oblivious to conclude that race has played no role in the dramatically inconsistent treatment given to these three former juvenile offenders by our court system."

González pointed out un rebutted evidence of Anderson's rehabilitation in prison, including his work as a machine operator in the license plate shop and other prison jobs, his good performance ratings, completing college courses, obtaining bookkeeping and accounting certifications, tutoring other offenders, and engaging in many other training and treatment programs. That suggests he deserved a new sentencing hearing, González wrote.

He also noted that the charges against Anderson were brought around the time of the "super-predator" myth of the 1990s — the debunked notion that some teens, mainly inner-city Black and brown offenders, were irredeemable, and which frequently played a role in lengthy sentences being given to minority offenders.

"It is disturbing that youthful white offenders who have appeared before the Supreme Court received relief that Mr. Anderson, who is Black, did not," his attorney, Travis Stearns, said in an email.

The King County Prosecutor's Office, which opposed granting Anderson a new sentence, urged the justices to overturn the decisions in Haag and Bassett, saying they were incorrectly decided. Anderson's youth did not play a significant role in his crimes, it argued.

Marsha Levick is the chief legal officer of the Philadelphia-based Juvenile Law Center, which has participated in juvenile-justice cases before the Washington Supreme Court and filed a friend-of-the-court brief supporting Anderson's appeal.

"It's surprising from a court that has been so steady in its journey in assessing extreme sentencing," Levick said. "They have stepped away from the path that they had been on."

Justices Charles Johnson, Barbara Madsen, Susan Owens and Helen Whitener joined Stephens in the majority. Owens and Whitener were in the majority in the Haag case as well.

The dissenting justices were Yu, González, Sheryl Gordon McCloud and Raquel Montoya-Lewis.

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HEADLINE	09/09 Kent tackles graffiti, drugs to combat crime
SOURCE	https://mynorthwest.com/3625588/kent-passes-three-ordinances-addressing-graffiti-drug-use-in-order-to-combat-rising-crime-rates/
GIST	<p>With three new ordinances passed to reduce rising crime rates, Kent will crack down on public drug use and panhandling, while also outlawing selling spray paint to minors.</p> <p>"You can't drink alcohol and walk down the sidewalk. You can't use marijuana while you're out in public. But until this ordinance passed, it wasn't illegal to use heroin in public," Kent Mayor Dana Ralph said during a press conference.</p>

While illicit drug use is declining in King County overall, according to Northpoint Substance Abuse Treatment Centers, Kent is facing an all-time high in heroin use, abuse, and trafficking. The use of cocaine and methamphetamine in Kent has declined over the last few years.

"I'm 100% for that," said Ursula Reutin, co-host of the Gee and Ursula Show, on Friday's show. "I don't know how many times I've gone to downtown Seattle, anytime I have guests who come to see me, and they're like, 'oh my gosh, I saw someone shooting up,' and it's sad. It affects everyone around you."

Deaths in Kent caused by illegal drugs account for 10.5 per 100,000 residents compared to 8.7 deaths attributed to alcohol alone.

For Kent's second ordinance preventing public panhandling on roads, Gee Scott, co-host of the Gee and Ursula Show, found himself in agreement due to the pandemic.

"In 2019, pre-pandemic, I would be up in arms about a law preventing you from going up to cars," Gee said. "After the pandemic and where we are today, I'm not going to encourage you to sit there when somebody comes up to your car. So I don't disagree with this one either. I really don't."

Making spray paint illegal for minors to purchase is a response to increased graffiti, according to the Kent Police Chief. Retailers will have to lock up spray paint for purchase by April 2023.

"I get so frustrated when I see graffiti. And I was thrilled when we heard that the state was going to be painting and erasing some of the graffiti along the freeways," Ursula said. "While they were doing that Revive I-5 work, no sooner does it get erased, there's more graffiti again. And it's just so irritating to me. I love the idea of 'you know what, why are you buying spray paint?'"

"I agree, Ursula. Lock up the spray paint," responded Gee. "Why? Because usually most people going in to buy spray paint, they up to no good."

Research data on graffiti from WA Police indicates the main offending age is between 12 to 25 years old from all socioeconomic environments. The largest percentage of offenders are from mid to high-level income families with a median age of 15, according to WA State Graffiti Task Force.

All three ordinances will go into effect Oct. 6.

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HEADLINE	09/09 PCSD: Orting man killed in 'ambush'
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/murder-51-year-old-orting-man-described-ambush/LTAMXRLTYJHKDHISAA3PMTUXPU/
GIST	<p>PIERCE COUNTY, Wash. — Two teens, Gabriel Davies and Justin Yoon, who are accused of killing a 51-year-old Orting man, were supposed to be starting their junior year of high school but instead, are behind bars after pleading not guilty to first-degree and second-degree murder charges.</p> <p>While the teens aren't speaking to law enforcement, their fathers have and investigators said their stories don't add up.</p> <p>On Friday, a Pierce County Sheriff's Department sergeant described the murder as an ambush.</p> <p>The 16-year-olds are awaiting trial on \$1 million bond after detectives said they shot and stabbed repeatedly Daniel McCaw in his home.</p> <p>Other Olympia High School students told KIRO 7 that they were still in shock after finding out that two of their own were accused of murder.</p>

“No one really knew what happened. It’s a big mystery. Everyone was posting about it and then we find out that people were saying that’s what he did,” student Andreas Enghold said.

He compared the chain of events to a movie.

RECAP

Last week, before the arrest, Davies was missing and that prompted an extensive search in Thurston County for the teen.

A day after, McCaw’s body was found and hours later, Davies was found safe in the woods.

Shortly after Davies’ safe return, investigators put things together, which led to Davies and Yoon’s arrests.

“They were both booked into the Raymond Hall detention facility for charges of murder in the second degree, burglary in the first-degree and unlawful possession of a firearm,” said Sergeant Darren Moss.

Moss said Davies knew the victim, who was his mom’s ex-boyfriend and someone he had lived with at times.

Court documents mention a biker gang that had threatened Davies before the murder.

Moss said he did not know about the bikers but the teen’s involvement was clear.

“There’s basically a confession through the father saying that both boys were admitting they were there,” Moss said.

Surveillance video showed the boys entering the victim’s home with pepper spray and wearing gloves. Moss said they were the only people who entered and left the home, for days.

“From the violence of this crime, the victim was stabbed multiple times as well. Maybe it was an ambush of some sort,” Moss said.

Because of the brutality of the crime, it is one of the reasons the teens are being charged as adults. KIRO 7’s Gwen Baumgardner spoke with Davies’ attorney on Friday and he told her that because of the complexities of the case, it is unlikely the teens will return to court on Oct. 6 as scheduled. He expects the date to be pushed back.

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HEADLINE	09/10 ‘Filthy Rags Outreach’ fights rising crime
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/filthy-rags-outreach-nonprofit-working-fight-crime-through-gang-intervention/CSOUGIMOOFBHRAZWRWJ2QOU4BI/
GIST	<p>The prison-based nonprofit, “Filthy Rags Outreach,” wants to fight rising crime through gang intervention and prevention programs.</p> <p>It has a two-fold mission — to help men change their lives in prison and then become mentors when they’re released.</p> <p>KIRO 7’s Gwen Baumgardner spoke on the phone with Charles Champion, an inmate at Stafford Creek Correction Center. Formerly known as “Baby Jody” within his gang, he is now inmate 878837.</p> <p>He has been in prison for more than 20 years after pleading guilty in 2004 to fatally shooting Des Moines police officer Steven Underwood, avoiding the death penalty through a plea deal.</p> <p>“I’ll tell you who he is, he’s a punk, a thug, a selfish scum-sucking parasite,” the victim’s father Dick Underwood said during Champion’s sentencing in 2005.</p>

Despite that description in court, Champion told KIRO 7 that he's now a very different man.

"I've been in prison a very long time. I'm very well known within the prison system and one of the things that are eye-opening for a lot of the guys in here is they look at me and say man, Charles Champion, I know him. I know how he used to be, and if this guy can change ... then I know that I can do it too," Champion said.

In prison, Champion said he found God and purpose. He also found fellowship with other inmates, like Alfonso Bell, a former gang member who also pleaded guilty to murder.

Both are eager to denounce their gangs and crimes, and now want others to do the same.

"That process had to start with exposing the false realities of the very lifestyle itself. So, that was the model that we began to create a curriculum around," Champion said.

They created a mentorship program in 2018.

"What began as only a few men on the prison big yard gathered around the desire to change, had just grown into a group of 30 men," Champion told KIRO 7.

They called themselves "The Filthy Rags Outreach," pulling it from a Bible verse.

The logo is a nod to how gangs identify their affiliation through bandana colors.

Even from prison, Champion knows about rising gang violence as he sees younger and younger inmates come through the prison system, highlighting a glaring gap in prevention and intervention.

"They just had a website and meetings on the inside when I stepped in," said Jessica, who helps out with the program.

Using a church as a meeting space, Jessica now helps with Filthy Rags' reentry program to make sure men don't relapse into gangs when their prison sentence ends.

"We can't do the work for them. They've got to do the work themselves, but you know, being able to help on the outside, once they get out and make their transition smooth, being able to connect them with resources," Jessica said.

The organization established a network of former gang members who now serve as mentors, targeting at-risk youth through community outreach events.

"I think police would be surprised to see, you know, a former gang member being the one to help her ... but who else could it be? Who else would it be, they don't trust the police. But they would trust somebody that has walked the life that they've lived," Jessica said.

Jessica, who has never been in a gang but was inspired by the change in Champion, reached out in 2020.

However, there are skeptics.

At his sentencing, Champion's attorney predicted his current role.

"He will likely be a spiritual leader to many in prison as he has been," his attorney said during his sentencing.

It was not well received.

	<p>However, Champion told KIRO 7 that he is determined not to let other men make the same mistake he did.</p> <p>“I would want them to know that I apologize. I’m sorry for what I’ve done and I’m doing everything that I can to try to change my life for the better,” Champion said.</p> <p>Champion still has more than 10 years left to serve in prison.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Filthy Rags Outreach said its focus is currently in Tacoma. But it wants to continue to expand to other cities in Western Washington and it is always looking for donations or mentors to help build its outreach efforts.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/09 Man sentenced 93yrs for 2014 murders
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/man-sentenced-93-years-murders-2014/281-426232db-5603-4deb-87d2-b4f869c3e8b7 https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/ali-muhammad-brown
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — A man charged with committing four murders back in 2014, was sentenced to 93 more years in prison in a King County Superior courtroom on Friday.</p> <p>Police say Ali Muhammad Brown went on a killing spree as part of his "jihad against Americans."</p> <p>Police say on April 27, 2014, Brown shot and killed Leroy Henderson along a stretch of road in Skyway. Five weeks later, police say Brown’s killing spree continued in Seattle when he took the lives of Ahmed Said and Dwone Anderson Young. Then he fled to New Jersey, where police say he killed a fourth man.</p> <p>Brown's appearance in court is what the families of three Washington victims have been waiting for over the last eight years.</p> <p>“Eight years I have been waiting for my justice,” said Falana Young, the mother of Dwone Anderson Young.</p> <p>“Your Honor, please give him the maximum of whatever you can do,” Dwone’s grandmother, Shelly Young said.</p> <p>“I am regretful for killing those people,” Brown said in court. “I ask for forgiveness from the families. I ask that they can forgive me. If they can’t, if not, just let me rot in hell if you want to, if you want to say that, but that is not going to change the past.”</p> <p>Brown was sentenced to life in prison without parole for the crimes he committed in New Jersey. On Friday, Judge Jim Rogers sentenced Brown to 1,118 months in the Department of Corrections. Brown is to serve that 93-year sentence consecutively.</p> <hr/> <p>Overview</p> <p>Ali Muhammad Brown is an American Islamic extremist responsible for four 2014 murders that he claimed were to take “vengeance” against U.S. policy in the Middle East.* Prior to the murders, Brown wrote in his journal that he intended to “follow” ISIS and “learn proper ways of jihadi training.”* Brown is also believed to have supplied funds to the Somali-based terror group al-Shabaab, and was on a federal terrorism watch list.* In November of 2016 he was sentenced to 36 ½ years in prison for armed robbery and weapons charges,* and in April 2018 he was sentenced to life in prison without parole for murder. Both convictions were in New Jersey.* Brown was later extradited to Washington, where he faces three further counts of murder.*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of Birth 1985 or 1986

- Place of Birth
U.S.

- Place of Residence
Washington, U.S. (incarcerated)

- Extremist Use of Social Media
Not determined.

- Education
Not determined.

- Citizenship
U.S.

- Arrested
7/17/2014: first degree murder, first-degree robbery, and terrorism, among others

- Custody
U.S.

Brown was born in the United States in the mid-1980s. At the time of his first killing, he lived in Seattle, Washington, though news reports characterized Brown as “homeless” or “transient.”

Between January 2002 and November 2004, Brown and three other men allegedly committed check fraud in order to fund [al-Shabaab](#). The men deposited fake checks to numerous banks, including Bank of America and Wells Fargo, and withdrew funds before the checks bounced.* Brown was convicted on bank fraud charges, but federal agents were unable to prove the funds ultimately supported terrorism. Ruben Shumpert, the leader of the ring, was absent at his 2006 federal sentencing and is believed to have been killed while fighting for al-Shabaab.* In 2008, Brown was convicted on charges of assault.* In 2012, he was convicted on charges of communication with a minor for immoral purposes and was sentenced to a year in prison.*

In April 2014, Brown drove up behind a pedestrian named Leroy Henderson in Skyway, Washington, and shot him 10 times in the back. The two men did not know each other.* On June 1, 2014, Brown, utilizing a dating app, met two gay men, Dwone Anderson-Young and Ahmed Said, at a Seattle gay club.* The three men returned to the home of one of the victims, and, according to a police report, Brown “executed” them in the street.* Later in June, in West Orange, New Jersey, Brown and two suspected co-conspirators drove up next to a car operated by Brendan Tevlin at a traffic light. Brown exited the car and shot Tevlin—whom he did not know—eight times at close range.* Brown made use of fake IDs, camouflage, and disguises to evade the police for nearly a month following the final killing.*

As revealed in police interviews after the murders, in spring 2014 Brown felt compelled to act against the United States as vengeance for civilians, particularly children, whom Brown claimed were being killed by the U.S. government in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and Iran. As Brown later said in a police interview, “[if] a man sees evil then he must take action against that evil.” Brown further admitted in his interview that he sought out adult males unaccompanied by females, children, or the elderly. He referred to these men as “just kills.”*

Following the final murder, Brown robbed two New Jersey men in separate incidents on June 29 and July 10.* On July 18, police discovered Brown hiding in the woods in a makeshift shelter in West Orange, New Jersey, only a couple hundred yards from the site of the July 10 robbery.*

In late July 2014, the state of New Jersey charged Brown with first-degree murder and first-degree robbery, among others.* The state of Washington later charged Brown on three counts of first-degree aggravated murder in August 2014.* In July 2015, Brown was indicted on terrorism charges in New

Jersey—making it the first time New Jersey prosecutors used terrorism charges against a defendant in a murder case.*

In August 2015, Brown pleaded “not guilty” to all charges in New Jersey.* In January 2016, a New Jersey court sentenced Brown to 36 ½ years in prison for robbery and weapons charges. On March 6, 2018, Brown pleaded guilty to Tevlin’s murder and to the murder of the three men in Seattle.* On April 24, 2018, he was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole in New Jersey. At sentencing, Judge Ronald Wigler called Brown’s killing of Tevlin “one of the most heinous, horrific, brutal crimes” he had witnessed in eight years on the bench.*

On October 30, 2019, Brown was extradited to Washington and booked into King’s County jail, following an executive agreement between the governors of New Jersey and Washington. He faces three charges of aggravated first-degree murder.* On November 13, 2019, he pleaded not guilty to all three counts. Once his Washington case is adjudicated, he will be returned to New Jersey to serve his life sentence there.

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